PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 116

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1986-87

COMPRISING PERIOD
11 MAY—15 MAY 1987

ISBN 0 10 681116 9

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11 May 1987

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 116**

TWELFTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1986-87

House of Commons

Monday 11 May 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BRITISH RAILWAYS (STANSTED) BILL

ABERYSTWYTH HARBOUR BILL
Lords amendments agreed to.

Oral Answers to Questions

ENERGY

Coal Industry

1. **Mr. Barron** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Coal to discuss changes in working practices in the coal industry.

11. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Coal; and what matters were discussed.

The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Peter Walker): I have regular meetings with the chairman of British Coal to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

Mr. Barron: In talking to the all-party minerals group and in recent public statements, the chairman of British Coal has spoken extensively about the changes in work practices in the Margam colliery and elsewhere in the British coalfields. Will the Secretary of State join me in asking the chairman of British Coal to meet the national executive committees of the mining unions so that any changes in national agreements can be negotiated in a proper manner instead of being handed down like a diktat from the British Coal board?

Mr. Walker: One has seen the reaction of Welsh miners and other people in the mining industry to the proposals that have been made. The hon. Gentleman knows that a great many people in the mining industry, including many of the staff of NACODS, work more than a five-day week. Most miners are interested in improving their productivity.

Mr. Haynes: Did the Secretary of State discuss the problem of mining subsidence with the chairman of British Coal, bearing in mind the problem that I and other hon. Members who represent mining constituencies have experienced and the fact that many miners have had claims rejected because British Coal has moved the goal posts and left people with a raw deal? I hope that the Secretary of State will discuss this problem with the chairman of British Coal and get it sorted out.

Mr. Walker: We have had discussions with the board and others on this subject and I hope that we can make some positive proposals in this sphere.

Mr. Colvin: I am sure that my right hon. Friend would welcome any developments in the coal industry that would make British coal competitive enough to burn in Fawley B power station in my constituency, if it is ever built. Can he yet reply to my constituents' request for a full public inquiry before he gives the go-ahead for that power station?

Mr. Walker: I am in a difficult position, as my hon. Friend will understand. I have had no application from the CEGB for such a power station, but I can assure my hon. Friend that I will bear in mind the local views, including the ones that he has just mentioned, if such an application takes place.

Mr. Dykes: Does my right hon. Friend agree with the interesting remarks that Mick McGahey made last week when he said that modern work practices must be introduced in Margam and elsewhere, and that the Labour movement should be a movement not a monument?

Mr. Walker: Yes, Sir. It is remarkable that at present Mr. Scargill seems unwilling to accept that large sections of this country work variable shifts. Nobody is asking any miner to work shifts that are in any way contrary to the present safety standards, and I find it quite staggering that this matter is not being looked at objectively. I am delighted that for once I have Mr. McGahey on my side.

Mr. Mason: Does the Secretary of State agree with the often expressed view of the chairman of British Coal that if the National Union of Mineworkers does not accept the proposed changes in working practices no new mines will be sunk or, alternatively, that he will call on the Union of Democratic Mineworkers to do the job? That is not conducive to good industrial relations. What does the Secretary of State think about it?

Mr. Walker: First, I hasten to say that I have heard no such remarks by the chairman of the Coal Board, who has sensibly pointed out to meetings which included members of the NUM and other mining unions that competition and productivity were the all-important elements and that it is in the interests of miners to do better in using the massive amount of capital that the Government have injected into the industry.

Mr. Hardy: Does the Secretary of State accept that some of the changes in working practices may require legislation rather than meetings with the chairman of British Coal, and that it would therefore be highly desirable for him to meet the national executives of the mining unions to discuss the successful future of the industry, for which Labour Members wish perhaps more than do Conservatives?

Mr. Walker: I am not sure who the hon. Gentleman means by "him", but if he means me, I am always willing to meet the executives of any of the unions concerned to discuss any questions that they wish to discuss. I should be only too delighted to discuss with the executive of any mineworkers union the manner in which they can take advantage of the £5 billion investment that the Government have put into the industry.

2. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the increase in labour productivity in the coal mining industry since March 1984.

Mr. Peter Walker: For the week ending 2 May average deep-mined revenue output per man shift was 3·65 tonnes, an impressive increase of more than 50 per cent. on the average of 2·43 for 1983-84.

Mr. Knox: Does my right hon. Friend agree that that substantial increase in productivity is a remarkable tribute to the miners and to the management of the National Coal Board, and does he expect further improvement in the forthcoming year?

Mr. Walker: Yes, I very much hope for further improvements, which I hope will be contrasted by those who are interested in the future of the industry with the fact that under the Labour Government productivity fell year after year.

Mrs. Clwyd: As the Secretary of State continually congratulates the south Wales miners on their increased productivity, will he tell them whether an application has been made to Brussels for EC financial aid for the Margam development and, if not, why not?

Mr. Walker: I am not sure whether the application has been made, but I assure the hon. Lady that it is being made.

Mr. Fallon: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that there has been a 43 per cent. improvement in productivity in the north-east coalfield in exactly the same period? Is he aware that that field will be profitable this year and for the first time in years is recruiting some 200 trainees? Does he agree that that gives the lie to the claim that the Government are not supporting the industry in the north-east?

Mr. Walker: Yes. In the five years of the Labour Government £3·5 billion at current prices was invested in the industry, compared with more than £5 billion in five years of Conservative Government. That proves the point. My hon. Friend is, however, slightly out of date. In the week ending 2 May the north east achieved an all-time record of 3·42 tonnes per man shift.

Mr. Allen McKay: Bearing in mind all the successes that the Secretary of State has been talking about, does he agree that taking on private capital or privatising the industry would be an ideological and political decision rather than a business decision?

Mr. Walker: I have always told the House that I have examined no immediate plans for privatisation, because at present substantial volumes of aid and assistance have to go in to rationalise the industry, but I would never be against the management and employees of the coal industry having a direct participation in their industry.

Mr. Ashby: Does my right hon. Friend accept that productivity in the south Derbyshire and south Leicestershire coalfields in my constituency is at its highest ever? Does he agree that that is a tribute to the reasonableness of the miners there, most of whom are members of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, and justifies the massive investment that the Government are to put into the area in the future?

Mr. Walker: There are few industries in the world in which during the period of a Government about £2 million per day has been invested in new machinery, new equipment and new capital. I am delighted that we have done that, and I am even more delighted that the miners have responded with the present marvellous productivity figures.

Mr. Jack Thompson: Is the Secretary of State aware that the increased productivity of British mines is due not only to the laudable efforts of the miners but to the machinery that has recently been introduced? Is he further aware that British mining machinery manufacturers are very critical of the Government's attitudes and policies towards the manufacture of that machinery?

Mr. Walker: It so happens that one of the most successful and biggest mining machinery manufacturers in the country is in my constituency. I might be accused of having put all this investment in the mining industry for that reason. It has no complaints about the Government.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: Is my right hon. Friend aware that my constituents have been breaking records week in and week out for the past six months and that the western area is now, for the first time in 13 years, profitable? Is it not the case that under the Conservative Government the coal industry is increasingly becoming one in which the work force and management are proud to work?

Mr. Walker: Yes. When the Conservative Government came to power after five years of declining productivity under the last Labour Government, no one would have considered it possible to increase productivity by 50 per cent. during this period.

Mr. Eadie: In the light of the satisfactory figures that the Secretary of State has announced, do the Government propose to do anything about cheap, subsidised coal imports?

Mr. Walker: The fact is that the coal industry will get a bigger share of the market due to its improved productivity, and I am delighted about that.

Foreign Nuclear Power Reactors

3. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to how many foreign nuclear power reactors are at approximately the same distance as or nearer to the United Kingdom than, Chernobyl.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Alastair Goodlad): The publicly available figures on the siting of power reactors show that there are some 185 civil power reactors in operation or under construction at approximately the same or a nearer distance to the United Kingdom than Chernobyl.

Mr. Chapman: Even if we did not have the highest standards of design, construction and safety in our British nuclear power stations, does not my hon. Friend's reply underline the absurdity of Britain having any policy either of standstill in nuclear power development or, even more absurd, of getting rid of such power stations? Is not the real lesson from Chernobyl that there must be the highest enforceable international standards of safety, inspection and exchange of information in all matters nuclear?

Mr. Goodlad: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. This country has welcomed and signed the two new conventions on early notification and mutual assistance. The International Atomic Energy Agency is considering a number of proposals for international co-operation, some of them put forward by my right hon. Friend. We are fully committed to that work.

Mr. Lofthouse: Is the Secretary of State aware that the chief inspector for nuclear installations told the Energy Select Committee last week that he did not have sufficient staff to enable him to liaise with his European counterparts? He also informed the Committee that, because of that shortage, various serious situations have been created at Sellafield which could have led to serious accidents. What are the Minister's views on that?

Mr. Goodlad: With the greatest possible respect, the hon. Gentleman has not quite accurately recounted what the chief inspector of nuclear installations said. The NII has always been able to carry its essential statutory function. The Government are determined that the NII should be adequately staffed by suitably qualified people. The inspectors were awarded a special pay increase of £3,500 last September. Salaries have been increased further to achieve the Government's determination to have 120 inspectors by April next year.

Dr. Michael Clark: Is my hon. Friend aware that I support the remarks of the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse)? I support nuclear power, but we can have it only if we are certain that there is adequate safety monitoring? Will my hon. Friend think again about his reply to the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford, because at the Energy Select Committee last week it was said that there was difficulty in recruiting people of the right calibre for the NII?

Mr. Goodlad: With respect, the remarks of the chief nuclear installations inspector to which my hon. Friend refers may have been made in ignorance of the further increases of pay that I have just announced.

Mr. Orme: Does the Minister agree that Mr. Ryder's comments to the Select Committee are important and that the Government should make a public response to Mr. Ryder's allegations?

Mr. Goodlad: I have no doubt that when the Select Committee's report appears a response will be forthcoming in the usual way.

Efficiency

4. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest assessment of the impact of his Department's measures to promote energy efficiency.

7. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what new proposals he has to increase measures for the conservation of energy.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. David Hunt): The take-up of schemes and sales of energy efficiency products increased significantly during Energy Efficiency Year. My right hon. Friend and I are building upon the success of the year through the development of a 14-point programme of action which I outlined to my hon. Friend in January.

Mrs. Bottomley: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply and the steps that he has taken to promote energy efficiency. Will he join me in welcoming the new initiative taken by Surrey county council whereby, for a nominal sum, firms can make use of an airborne survey, using infrared scanning, to detect heat loss from buildings, and can then take remedial action to save significantly on their heating bills?

Mr. Hunt: I am happy to join my hon. Friend in congratulating Surrey county council on its mounting of the airborne thermographic survey. It is a worthwhile and forward-looking initiative. Thermographic surveys can pinpoint energy waste and are a vital weapon in the battle to ensure that we are a more energy-efficient nation.

Mr. Janner: How much are the Government proposing to spend in the next 12 months on energy conservation, and how much do they believe that such expenditure will save the country?

Mr. Hunt: The Government propose to continue the clear emphasis that they have already placed on concentrating more help on those who are in the greatest need, as visualised in the announcement of my right hon.

Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment that the home insultation scheme will be concentrated on low-income families. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy has announced the furthering of the work of the vital community insulation projects.

Mr. Rost: Can my hon. Friend report any progress in his discussions with the Treasury to allow the public sector to take advantage of private sector energy management companies offering third-party financing on an energy-shared saving basis? Does he realise that the delay has held up a huge area of investment in the public sector that could have reduced public expenditure on energy bills?

Mr. Hunt: The new Government guidelines on the use of contract energy management in the public sector have increased significantly the ways in which taxpayers and ratepayers can be saved hundreds of millions of pounds a year in energy bills. The guidelines are an important step forward in our campaign to increase energy efficiency in the public sector.

Mr. Rowlands: Will the Minister confirm one simple fact? Does he accept that where there are no MSC-sponsored community energy projects, individual poorer households will not now be able to obtain the equivalent of single payment for draughtproofing, as they were until recently?

Mr. Hunt: The hon. Gentleman constantly decries the work of community insulation projects. When the Government came into power there were six such projects, and there are now 385. It is the Government's determination to ensure that there is a correct balance of groups throughout the country. The ultimate target is a total—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Hunt: I remind the hon. Gentleman that when the Government came to power there were six groups that had been set up by his Administration. We now have a target of 500 groups, and I hope that these will cover all the areas that need this support.

Union of Democratic Mineworkers

5. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any plans to meet the Union of Democratic Mineworkers to discuss industrial relations in the mining industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I am pleased to say that I shall be addressing the Union of Democratic Mineworkers' annual conference, when I expect to discuss many issues with it.

Mr. Adley: I thank my right hon. Friend for that excellent reply. Is it not stunning proof of one nation when representatives of working miners get round to inviting a Conservative Secretary of State to address their annual conference? Given the recent expressions of dissent from Mr. Scargill by even the National Union of Mineworkers in south Wales, does my right hon. Friend agree that only the Conservative party could have released miners from the bondage of the NUM?

Mr. Peter Walker: Obviously, I welcome the opportunity to address the conference of those mineworkers who abided by the traditional position of mineworkers in this country of taking industrial action only after they had balloted. Those miners overwhelmingly balloted not to strike and with great courage continued to work during that period. I welcome the opportunity to discuss matters with the union, especially as its members, too, broke all-time production records last week.

Mr. O'Brien: In the discussions that the Secretary of State may have with members of the UDM, or any other mining unions, will he raise with them the arrears that are due to pensioners and widows as a result of their pension increase? Will the Secretary of State accept from me that those pensioners have not received their increases, which were due last October? Will he assure the UDM and other mineworkers that that pension increase will be paid? Will he assure the UDM and other mineworkers that the devastating effect on retired miners as a result of not receiving that increase will be erased and that the despicable attitude of British Coal and the trustees of the pension scheme in not paying that increase will be changed? Does he agree that the pension should be increased?

Mr. Walker: I also agree that, as a result of this Government, more miners have retired on better pensions than ever before. The hon. Gentleman is well aware of that.

Mr. Andy Stewart: I am delighted that my right hon. Friend will address the members of the UDM at its annual meeting. Is it not because of the present industrial relations attitude adopted by the UDM that we have these record productivity increases? Is not Nottinghamshire the cheapest producer of coal in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Walker: Obviously, I am delighted that the week I have just quoted represented an all-time record for the Nottinghamshire miners. Their achievements have been remarkable. The entire nation praises the UDM, not only for what it is achieving at the present time, but for the manner in which UDM members faced the mobs organised against them during the coal dispute.

Mr. Ashton: Is the Secretary of State aware that last Thursday the UDM in Nottinghamshire had a secret ballot and voted overwhelmingly for the Labour party? In my constituency and in Mansfield they were the best results that we have had for many years. Is the Secretary of State aware that the Tories took the city of Nottingham —they won it by one seat, when Labour had previously held it by one seat? In one campaign the Tories won by three votes only and the alliance did not win a seat, although the Communists did?

Mr. Walker: I note the hon. Gentleman's neurosis about the impending election. Given the lack of support that the Labour party gave to the Nottinghamshire miners I expect some devastatingly bad results for the Labour party in the election.

Commercial Buildings

6. **Mr. Powley** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement concerning the construction of more energy-efficient commercial buildings.

Mr. David Hunt: My energy efficiency office is concerned to encourage the construction of energy-efficient commercial buildings and supports a range of initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of new commercial buildings, in collaboration with professional groups and the industry.

Mr. Powley: I thank my hon. Friend for his constructive reply. Does he agree with me that if measures were taken along these lines there would be sufficient energy savings to produce a much more economical operation for the companies concerned? Does he agree also that it is necessary to involve architects and developers in the measures that he has outlined? Does he further agree that it is important to proceed along these lines to ensure a better working environment for those employed in such buildings?

Mr. David Hunt: I agree completely with my hon. Friend. All new buildings should incorporate the latest energy efficient designs. Consumer expectation has been raised by the development of low-energy buildings. However, it is calculated that industrial and commercial buildings waste £800 million a year, and that is why I recognised what my hon. Friend said, that we must work harder to gain the support of building professionals, through close collaboration.

Mr. Jim Callaghan: Will the Minister tell the House exactly what measures his Department will take to promote energy efficiency, not only in commercial buildings, but in old-age pensioners homes, to prevent the high number of deaths from hypothermia every dreadful winter?

Mr. Hunt: The Government have done more than any other Government, not just in providing heating allowances and heating support, but in ensuring that community insulation projects go from strength to strength. We are now aiming at such projects producing 8,000 jobs and insulating over 300,000 houses per year, particularly those belonging to people on low incomes.

Opencast Mining

8. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the output from opencast mining in 1987.

Mr. David Hunt: The Government have no target for opencast production.

Mr. Hardy: Does the Minister accept that a substantial level of opencast production is secured at the cost of grave disadvantage to communities living in the vicinity of mining sites? Bearing in mind that there are gatherings of those who are poised to secure profit from the privatisation of the coal business, will the Minister assure hon. Members that the views of local communities will be given commanding influence when any proposals are considered to ensure that the local environment, rather than private profit, is preserved? Will the Minister also ensure that the people of Rawmarsh, Wath and Swinton in my constituency are safe from the development of an unwanted site?

Mr. Hunt: I hope that the hon. Gentleman, with his background in and experience of the coal industry, is aware that British Coal is among the world leaders in the restoration of opencast sites. It is important to recognise that the right balance must be struck between developing opencast coal reserves and the need to protect the environment. British Coal's new booklet on opencast coal mining emphasises the opencast executive's positive commitment to the highest environmental standards.

Mr. Michael Morris: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the cost of production of opencast coal is way below that of deep-mined coal and that, particularly over the past 10 years, there has been a total transformation in the restoration of workings of opencast coal mines, to the extent that we lead the world?

Mr. Hunt: I completely agree with my hon. Friend. I emphasise again that opencast coal is an important resource in the United Kingdom that can be produced cheaply and profitably. It is a vital part of British Coal's operations, particularly in deep-mine pits, such as Lea Hall and Littleton, where opencast coal is absolutely necessary to make the product burnable.

Mr. Woodall: Is the Minister aware that it is widely forecast that opencast mine output is to be increased vastly by private enterprise? Is he further aware that only British Coal has detailed knowledge of the quantity, quality and so on of coal reserves? That knowledge has been gained at vast expense. Will he ensure that any information regarding coal reserves that is sought by private contractors will be made available at a substantial cost commensurate with the cost of obtaining such information?

Mr. Hunt: The level of opencast output has to be determined by the market, subject to the acceptability of individual planning projects as determined through the existing planning system. As I said, British Coal takes its responsibilities as a good neighbour very seriously. Its record demonstrates that in the opencast sector.

Mr. Ashby: Does my hon. Friend accept that opencast mining has a devastating effect on communities? Does he consider that the right policy to adopt is that there should be no more than one opencast mine at a time in an area, not two or three at a time?

Mr. Hunt: The planning procedures ensure that applications to work opencast coal do not go ahead without all the arguments for and against being aired. That allows, in the best possible way, for a balanced judgment to be reached. I add that the opencast executive spends a great deal of time and effort in reducing the impact of its sites and restoring them once coaling has ceased.

Mr. Rowlands: Is the Minister aware that in our valley the opencast executive is proposing major schemes to tear up both sides of the valley? Is he aware also that the present Secretary of State for Wales overruled his own planning inspector on a scheme in his own constituency on environmental grounds? Is that not a good example for others to follow?

Mr. Hunt: The hon. Gentleman is constantly trying to inject emotion into this afternoon's Question Time. A little reality would be helpful. I think he should recognise that British Coal is spending a considerable amount of time and effort to increase both public and local authority understanding of opencast mining. I commend to him the booklet that British Coal published last week.

Community Insulation Programme

9. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement concerning the expanded community insulation programme and its implications for jobs.

12. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received concerning plans to revise the home insulation programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: Neighbourhood energy action has welcomed my announcement about future arrangements to finance the work of the community insulation projects. By 1988 the number of people employed by projects and learning valuable skills will have increased from 6,000 to 8,000, and over 300,000 homes a year will be being insulated.

Mr. Thompson: I thank my right hon. Friend for that encouraging reply and I welcome the good news about jobs. Does he agree that it is typical of the way that Conservative Governments take action to get on with the job and take a lead in matters concerning energy conservation, job creation and help for pensioners and others with their heating?

Mr. Walker: Yes. It has been a staggering achievement already. Half a million such homes have been insulated, at the same time helping people to obtain new jobs and new skills. But even more remarkable is that in the next couple of years that figure will rise to 300,000 a year. That will mean a great deal of comfort and warmth to elderly and low-income families, and also a great deal of work.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Is the Secretary of State aware that the problems in Leeds with the unions which inhibited work being done on council houses, have been overcome and that the work is now going ahead? The only thing that people are concerned about is that the new regulations will prevent the work being done for the benefit of many people, both in council and private houses. Therefore, will the Secretary of State look again at the regulations and ensure the development of a scheme for the benefit of all?

Mr. Walker: I am anxious to develop the scheme. We have succeeded in developing the scheme to a massive multiple of what existed under the Lib-Lab pact.

Leicester (Heat and Power)

10. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the latest position concerning the supply and purchase of gas by the Leicester Combined Heat and Power Consortium (Leicester Energy Ltd.).

Mr. David Hunt: The contractual negotiations are, of course, a commercial matter for the Leicester consortium and its fuel suppliers, but I understand that the consortium has not yet finalised arrangements for the purchase of fuel supplies.

Mr. Bruinvels: Is my hon. Friend aware that the £80 million investment by the Leicester Combined Heat and Power Consortium (Leicester Energy Ltd.) is under threat because of the difficulty in negotiating a regular long-term supply from British Gas? Is he aware also that it is now considering purchasing a North sea gas field? Can my hon. Friend help in some way to bring prosperity to the area and reduce the cost of oil heating by getting British Gas to offer a more reasonable price for the power available?

Mr. Hunt: I hope my hon. Friend will recognise that it is not for Ministers to intervene in negotiations between the Leicester consortium and its fuel suppliers, but he is right to highlight the importance of the scheme. The consortium is to be congratulated on producing a professional report. I hope that the scheme will go ahead if it can be proved to be economically viable. I repeat that if it had not been for my hon. Friend and my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Spencer), we would not have recognised the importance of the scheme in the first place.

British Coal Enterprise Ltd.

13. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he next proposes to discuss with the chairman of British Coal the progress of British Coal Enterprise Ltd.

Mr. Peter Walker: I discuss the progress of British Coal Enterprise Ltd. with the chairman of the British Coal Corporation whenever it seems appropriate to do so.

Mr. Dormand: Will the Secretary of State make it clear to the chairman that no one really believes the stories about the so-called wild success of British Coal Enterprise Ltd.? Will he also take the opportunity to re-examine the whole scheme with a view to replacing the thousands of jobs that have been lost in mining areas? At the same time, will he stop the closure of pits until alternative employment is available? The situation is desperate in many areas, including my own.

Mr. Walker: Since British Coal Enterprise Ltd. started we have spent £28 million of the £40 million that was allocated, and we have created 16,641 new job opportunities in coal-mining communities. In the north-east, 2,386 new jobs have so far been created and by the time we get through the £40 million, some 25,000 will have been created. This is an outstanding record compared with anything that has happened previously.

Mr. Leigh: When we have won the next election, will my right hon. Friend consider discussing with the chairman of British Coal the extension of real democratic control of the coal miners by working towards a management and work force buy-out?

Mr. Walker: As I said earlier, I am all in favour of those who work in this industry, and who are having such success in increased productivity, having the correct participation in their industry.

THE ARTS

Films

19. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on his policy towards fulfilling the commercial potential of films produced by students.

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce): I have ministerial responsibility for the National Film and Television School. The main purpose of the school's film-making is educational. Where opportunities arise, the films are distributed commercially. A recent example is "Home from the Hill", a successful documentary that was broadcast on BBC television.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: I think I am right in saying that the film and television industries derive great benefit from the school and, of course, from its students. What part do the industries play in supporting the school, and should they not play a greater part?

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is right. The school produces people who are expert in the television and film worlds and provides a fund of talent, especially for the television industry. Therefore, the television industry and the film industry produce about half the funds. I welcome that, and there is scope for more funding on their part.

East Midlands

20. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in the east midlands.

Mr. Luce: I have no record of recent representations about the level of financial support for the arts by specific local authority areas. The level of support is, of course, within the responsibility of each local authority.

Mr. Haynes: Will the Minister join me in recognising the efforts being made in Nottingham and in my constituency with a view to providing more cinema screens and to encourage Nottingham city council to go along with the appropriate scheme that is on offer? At the same time, will he encourage the British Film Institute, the county council and those authorities that have been involved, and will he provide some money to help them with this wonderful project?

Mr. Luce: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman recognises the way in which the arts are expanding in the east midlands. I welcome his support and encouragement. The Government have injected considerable extra resources into the east midlands regional arts association. Support has gone up by 146 per cent. in real terms since 1979. I hope that the hon. Gentleman recognises and acknowledges that and that he will encourage his own district authority, Ashfield, to give some money to the arts. It does not do that at present.

Mr. St. John-Stevas: In the light of that reply, will my right hon. Friend assure the authorities in the east midlands that he utterly rejects the policy put forward by the Adam Smith Institute and reported in *The Daily Telegraph* today that public support of the arts should cease? Will he give the House an undertaking that he will continue the Government's supportive policy and that he will build upon it?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for raising this matter. He served with great distinction as Minister for the Arts. I am glad to reaffirm that the Government believe that taxpayers' support for the arts has an important role to play alongside private sector support.

Mr. Skinner: On this question of the arts and the east midlands, why is it that the Tory Government and other Governments before them never seem to recognise that pit brass bands are part of the culture of that area? Is he aware that they are spending considerable amounts of money on their instruments as a result of having to lead the marches against this Government's policies over the past 10 years? In the interests of fairness, it is high time that some money was given to them as well as to opera and all the rest.

Mr. Luce: I welcome the hon. Gentleman's new-found interest in the arts, and I acknowledge the important role that brass bands play, particularly in northern areas. I have heard a number of them myself.

"The Milkman's on His Way"

22. **Mr. Moynihan** asked the Minister for the Arts if he has received a copy of the book, "The Milkman's on His Way"; and if he will make a statement on his policy with regard to the availability of this book in public libraries.

Mr. Luce: I have seen this book. In my view it is not suitable to be stocked in a children's library.

Mr. Moynihan: If the children's sections of libraries such as Haringey library persist in stocking such depraved and corrupt literature, what action can my right hon. Friend, or indeed the ratepayers, take?

Mr. Luce: I agree with my hon. Friend's reflections on the book, which does a great deal to undermine family life and moral standards. I feel that it is right for anyone who sees such books to speak up strongly. The ratepayers in individual local authorities are the most important people to make representations to those authorities. I have no powers to intervene. It is up to the ratepayers to make their views known. The matter is in their hands.

Mr. Tony Banks: I have here a letter sent by the chairman of the Conservative party to the "proprietor" of St. Pancras library, at No. 100 Euston road. We all know that the chairman of the Conservative party comes from the "burn-the-books" school of Toryism, but will the Minister give the House an assurance that, in the regrettable and miserable event of his Government being re-elected, that will not form part of their hidden manifesto and that the existence of a "proprietor" of St. Pancras library is not an indication that a future Conservative Government would privatise the libraries?

Mr. Luce: The hon. Gentleman seems a bit jittery this afternoon. I regret that he did not join my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) in condemning the books that we see in some boroughs, particularly in London, and I hope that he will reconsider. As for our general public libraries, they are outstanding. They include some of the best libraries in the world, and we have every intention of maintaining them.

Mr. Nicholas Baker: Does my right hon. Friend agree with those local authorities that seem to regard the works of Enid Blyton—which are certainly not great literature—as subversive?

Mr. Luce: It is true that some local authorities have said that Enid Blyton is sexist, which I find extraordinary. Again, however, it is ultimately in the hands of ratepayers to make their views known, and I hope that more of them will do so.

London Local Authorities

23. **Mr Cohen** asked the Minister for the Arts what discussions he has had in the last month with arts organisations in London about the level of financial support from local authorities.

Mr. Luce: I regularly visit arts organisations in London, and their representatives come to see me. We discuss the level of support from local authorities whenever the question of finance arises.

Mr. Cohen: Have not the Tory Government savaged public support for the arts in London by abolishing the GLC and making cuts in local authorities finances? Have not the Liberals, when they have had control in Tower Hamlets, also devastated their local arts? Is it not the case that Londoners who want access to their own culture, recreation and heritage without paying through the nose will have to support Labour?

Mr. Luce: The hon. Gentleman is living in a world of his own if he thinks that there was a cutback in arts support as a result of the abolition of the GLC or the metropolitan authorities. The opposite happened. If the hon. Gentleman looks at the metropolitan counties throughout the country, he will see that there was a net increase in overall resources made available to the arts as a result of abolition. The local authorities produce more money than before abolition, and it is time that the hon. Gentleman recognised that.

Mr. Chapman: Does my right hon. Friend agree that arts organisations in London need funding not only from local authorities but from business sponsorship schemes? Will he report progress on that, and will he say whether the recent reports are true about a deathbed conversion on the part of the Labour party in favour of encouraging business sponsorship of the arts?

Mr. Luce: I agree with my hon. Friend, who repeatedly in the past has supported business sponsorship. It is making an increasingly important contribution to the arts. As a result of the business sponsorship incentive scheme, over 450 new businesses now support the arts. That is yet another important way in which we can add to the overall resources of the arts. As for the Labour party, it is for it to speak for itself, not for me to do that.

Mr. Fisher: I confirm that when they are in office in a month's time the next Labour Government will continue the business incentive sponsorship scheme. However, does the Minister agree that that scheme is totally irrelevant to Tower Hamlets, and will he join me in condemning the actions of the Liberal-controlled group in Tower Hamlets, which has annihilated arts spending there? The Minister is quite wrong to say that his hands are clean, because it was the abolition of the Greater London council that put pressure on that group, and funding for the arts in London will continue to be under threat while this Government are so hostile to local government expenditure.

Mr. Luce: I should start by welcoming most warmly the fact that the hon. Gentleman has changed the views of the Labour party. Last week he opposed the business sponsorship incentive scheme. Now he says positively that the Labour party will support it. Even though it may be a deathbed repentance, I welcome it most warmly. It is absolutely true that the alliance-dominated council in Tower Hamlets has cut back its expenditure on the arts to such an extent that the Whitechapel art gallery has had its overall finances reduced and the Half Moon theatre has also had its finances reduced. I very much regret that.

CIVIL SERVICE

Drug Addiction

60. **Sir David Price** asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he will make a statement on measures to combat drug addiction within the Civil Service.

The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce): All the evidence presently available suggests that drug misuse in the Civil Service is on a very small scale. But we do not feel we can be complacent. A group of officials from my Department and others will shortly be meeting representatives of the Civil Service trades unions to review the evidence, draft policy guidance to Departments and offer advice to Civil Service managers.

Sir David Price: I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. Does he agree that, as there are between 60,000 and 100,000 known drug addicts in this country, it is not unreasonable to assume that some of them are to be found in every large organisation? The Civil Service employs over 600,000 people. What is my right hon. Friend doing to ensure that adequate counselling and help are being provided for those who may take to drugs? He will agree that it is one of the most intractable problems that is facing every part of this country.

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He should know—perhaps he does know—that the level of drug misuse in the Civil Service is extremely low. Last year there were only six reported cases of drugs misuse. That shows how small the problem is. However, as it is a widespread problem, it is right that the management of the Civil Service should have guidance at its disposal to make sure that we can deal with these problems as they arise.

Northern Region (Job Dispersal)

61. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he has any plans for the transfer of Civil Service posts to the northern region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The DHSS proposes to centralise certain benefit work in Newcastle from local offices. This relocation will increase its work force in Newcastle by at least 300 posts. The needs of the regions will continue to be taken into account whenever the question of location of new work or relocation of existing work arises.

Mr. Dormand: Is it not a fact that for the eight years that this Government have been in power they have shed an ocean of crocodile tears about the high unemployment in the northern region? Their hypocrisy has been demonstrated by the fact that during that period they have deliberately decided not to transfer a single Civil Service post to the north. Will the Minister take down from the shelf the Hardman committee report and see just how strong is the case for dispersal to the northern region?

Mr. Luce: I know of the hon. Gentleman's persistent interest in this question, and I had hoped that he would be pleased by the announcement that I have just made of

300 additional jobs. The hon. Gentleman knows that our dispersal policy is very nearly completed and that 6,000 posts are being dispersed to other parts of the country. I acknowledge that they have not gone to the northern area; they have gone to Scotland and to other parts of the country, because the northern area, compared with other areas, has a high proportion of civil servants to the total number of the working population. Our dispersal and relocation policies mean that other jobs will be going both to his area and to other areas.

Recruitment

62. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo** asked the Minister for the Civil Service what measures he is taking to ensure the adequacy of recruitment methods of civil servants for the 21st century.

Mr. Luce: Methods of recruitment to the Civil Service are revised as the tasks required of civil servants and the skills and qualities they need change. Within the Civil Service Commission, the recruitment research unit is actively engaged in reviewing the effectiveness of existing procedures and developing improved procedures. Underlying these changes is a continuing commitment to the fundamentals of fair and open competition and selection on merit.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. However, is he aware that concern has been expressed about bias in Civil Service recruitment procedures? Can my right hon. Friend assure the House that there is no bias—for example, that the Oxbridge syndrome does not come into play? Can he give us an absolute assurance that that does not apply to what I believe is known as the fast track?

Mr. Luce: I think that the commission goes out of its way to get across to all sections of the community the opportunities available in the Civil Service. On my hon. Friend's last question, he will be interested to note that the proportion of Oxbridge graduates who enter the high-flying part of the Civil Service decreased from 75 per cent. in 1982 to 46 per cent. in 1986. That indicates that we are getting an intake of civil servants from a much wider background than previously.

Dr. McDonald: Is the Minister aware that, to ensure good recruitment to the Civil Service, the Government must appear to be a good employer? Is he further aware that after eight years of mismanagement including the dismantling of the pay research unit, low pay and under-staffing, and capped by the abolition of trade union rights at GCHQ, the Government cannot convince anyone that they will be a good employer of civil servants in future? Is that not a further reason for the rejection of the Government at the polls on 11 June?

Mr. Luce: I think that the hon. Lady is indulging in a little wishful thinking. Our record of managing the Civil Service is remarkable. There has been a great improvement in the efficiency and professionalism of the service. Its staff has been reduced to fewer than 600,000, but it is a streamlined, dedicated and loyal service. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. These are very important questions.

Women (Public Appointments)

63. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Minister for the Civil Service what steps he is taking to ensure that a large proportion of women are appointed to public bodies.

Mr. Luce: The public appointments unit is currently processing the list of more than 600 women compiled by the campaign for women into public life. The unit will put these names forward to Departments whenever suitable opportunities arise, together with names of other women received following recent publicity for the work of the unit.

Mr. Baker: Is my right hon. Friend satisfied that the number of women in the Civil Service is increasing? Does he share my hope that the number of women in the Civil Service and in public life will continue to increase after the next general election?

Mr. Luce: I am glad that the public appointments unit, which puts names forward for non-departmental public bodies, has received an increasing number of women's names, thanks to the co-operation of a number of sources, including hon. Members. Clearly, the Government will continue to support all the efforts being made to increase the number of women able to serve in public life.

Mr. Tony Banks: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that only 14 per cent. of the Prime Minister's appointments to public bodies have been of women? Is he further aware — although this is not his direct responsibility — that Britain has only two women ambassadors throughout the world? Does that not show that the Prime Minister and the Conservative Government have betrayed women, just as they have betrayed all other categories of our society?

Mr. Luce: The more questions the hon. Gentleman asks, the more excitable he becomes. The proportion of women in non-departmental public bodies is now 19 per cent. and not 14 per cent., and thanks to the efforts of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister last autumn to raise interest, the public appointments unit now has far more women's names.

Top Jobs (Report)

64. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Minister for the Civil Service what action he proposes to take following the report of the Royal Institute of Public Administration on top jobs, a copy of which has been sent to him.

Mr. Luce: I welcome the RIPA report as a useful contribution to the continuing debate about the work of central Government. It mirrors in a number of respects the conclusions reached by the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service a year ago, to which the Government's response was presented to Parliament last July.

Mr. Howarth: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is of great benefit to civil servants that they should enjoy the process of interchange on secondment with outside bodies, particularly with industry? Will he confirm that that remains, and will remain after the next general election, the Government's policy? What is the rate of inward secondment to the Civil Service?

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is right to attach importance to inward and outward secondments to the Civil Service. That is very much at the heart of the Government's policy on the Civil Service. I am pleased to be able of announce that in 1986 outward secondment has gone up from 229 to 280 people and inward secondment has gone up from 157 to 189 people. That shows that we are building on our policy of secondment.

Business of the House

3.30 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I should like to make a brief business statement.

In the light of the announcement earlier today by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, the business for the remainder of the week will be rearranged. I propose to make a further statement to the House later today, following discussions through the usual channels.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): We very much welcome the circumstances that have brought the right hon. Gentleman to the House, and we shall look forward to his further statement at 7 o'clock this evening.

Mr. John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): With regard to the coming struggle, to which Conservative Members look forward with relish, does my right hon. Friend recall the words of Disraeli and Lord Randolph Churchill, "Trust the people"? That is exactly what we are going to do.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell (South Down): With reference to the business provisionally being considered through the usual channels for the remainder of the week, will the Leader of the House see whether he can transfer the Territorial Sea Bill debate from Wednesday to Tuesday, which may be more convenient for some hon. Members with a special interest in that legislation?

Mr. Biffen: Most certainly.

Sir Kenneth Lewis (Stamford and Spalding): Is my right hon. Friend aware that I have not heard the announcement which he said my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made? But, in so far as my right hon. Friend has now conveyed it to me, may I—I think that the House agrees — congratulate him on the way in which he has answered our questions during business time throughout this Parliament? However, I am sorry that he seems to have fallen down in his last statement. I hope that he realises that, by announcing the election for June, he is taking from me and from many of my colleagues our summer holiday pay.

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): Does the rearrangement of business for the rest of this week include the rearrangement of today's business?

Mr. Biffen: No. It is hoped that today's business will stand as announced last Thursday.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): May I presume that, among the immensely important business that will have to be rearranged, my right hon. Friend will make certain that we have a debate on the Procedure Committee's reports?

Mr. Biffen: I am sure that I can arrange for that to be considered, but it is a matter of travelling hopefully rather than expectantly.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Does the Leader of the House think that it is legitimate for the guillotine to be used on legislation as important as the Scottish rates legislation? Does he agree that, if we had fixed-term Parliaments, the Government would not find themselves in the position of having to bludgeon the House into ramming through important legislation of this kind?

Mr. Biffen: The decision of the House to provide for a guillotine motion on the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill was taken some weeks ago.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We do not know what the rearrangement of business will be. I am sure that the House would agree that since this is a private Members' day we should reserve further questions until later.

Local Authority Expenditure (Scotland)

3.34 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on local authority budgets and rates for 1987-88.

Local authorities in Scotland have budgeted to spend £122·1 million or 3·7 per cent. over guidelines in 1987-88 and have determined rates which will, on average, increase domestic rate bills by 15 per cent. For ratepayers in some areas, the increase is much higher. This is disappointing and unsatisfactory. The rate support grant settlement was a very generous one, intended to allow local authorities generally to maintain real levels of spending without substantial rate increases. However, too many authorities have planned for quite unacceptable levels of growth.

After consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, I have therefore decided that, to encourage those authorities with planned overspends to reconsider their budgets, there will be grant penalties for overspending on a tariff which starts at grant loss of 70 per cent. of overspend, rising to 120 per cent. for a 2·5 per cent. overspend. Above 2·5 per cent. the rate of penalty increases to 140 per cent. for a 3 per cent. overspend, and then to 175 per cent. for a 3·5 per cent. overspend or above. The rate of increase between each of these points is even. On the basis of planned expenditure, the total penalty will be £202 million, though penalties will subsequently be adjusted in the light of actual expenditure, and it is therefore open to authorities to reduce their liability to penalty, or to recover penalties completely, by reducing their expenditure. I hope that many authorities will do so, and it is to assist them in doing so that I am making this announcement of our intentions.

I am pleased to note that, for 1986-87, 40 authorities have provisional outturns within guidelines, and a number of authorities which planned to spend over guidelines have reduced their expenditure on outturn. As a result, some £28 million in grant penalties levied in 1986-87 will be returned to the authorities concerned.

I am today laying the necessary rate support grant order in respect of grant reductions in 1987-88, and repayments for 1986-87. A circular is being sent to all local authorities giving them the details.

Grant penalties will apply to all authorities planning to overspend. I have also considered the special problems facing ratepayers in the areas of those authorities which are planning the most substantial expenditure excesses over guideline. As a result I have decided to initiate action in terms of section 5 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1966 in respect of Lothian regional council, Clackmannan district council and the city of Edinburgh district council on the ground that their planned expenditure for 1987-88 is excessive and unreasonable. Letters have today been sent to the three councils proposing rate reductions of 3·9p, 2·8p and 2·8p respectively, and inviting each to make representations about the proposed reduction. If implemented, my proposals would result in a reduction in the average domestic rate bill of £50·77 in Edinburgh, £28·59 in other parts of Lothian region, and £16·61 in Clackmannan.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): I cannot congratulate the Secretary of State on his timing, but I suspect that it is not fortuitous. I doubt whether the fact that this statement is coming two months earlier than normal is a measure of increasing efficiency in the Scottish Office. However, it may have a great deal to do with coming events.

The penalty that has been announced is unashamedly linked to guidelines. I can remember — no doubt the Secretary of State can also — the happy days when we talked about indicative guidelines. That adjective seems peculiarly inappropriate now that the guideline is a simple straightforward benchmark for punitive action by the Government against any council that meets with their displeasure.

Will the Secretary of State confirm that last year Scottish local authorities were 3·9 per cent. over guidelines and attracted a penalty of £125 million, and that this year they are 3·7 per cent. over guidelines but are attracting a penalty of £202 million? In other words, the excess over guidelines is down, but the penalty has been increased by 62 per cent. Will the Secretary of State explain why this particularly vindictive line has been taken on this occasion? Will he confirm that, in effect, we are nearly returning to the penalty range of 1985-86 with the small exception that the peak is now 175 per cent. penalty while the worst that was managed in the past was 170 per cent.?

Does the Secretary of State accept that three councils are being picked out for special, and some would say vindictive, treatment? Is it not true that Edinburgh will be left with no rate support grant settlement and that its loss will be £12·5 million, that Clackmannan will be left with no rate support grant money this year and that Lothian will lose £51 million? If the councils cut their budgets and planned expenditure as the Secretary of State is instructing, will he be prepared to adjust their general penalty at that point, or will they be left to wait for a long time for the repayment which would then be due to them?

Will the Secretary of State explain why Lothian, for example, is being hit in this way when the norm for the calculation over guidelines [illegible] budget plus 3·75 per cent. and Lothian's guidelines are budget plus 2 per cent.? To put the matter into perspective, will he comment on the fact that, while Lothian is 7·4 per cent. over guidelines, last year's budget of a Tory administration was 6·6 per cent. over guidelines in itself? Since then Lothian council has inherited substantial difficulties from that Conservative administration which cynically raided balances in a way which would be strenuously criticised if that policy had been followed by other councils.

Are we not seeing a further cut in Government support for local services? If the penalties are exacted in full, will that not bring down the rate support grant percentage from 55·6 per cent. to a new low of about 50 per cent.? Is not this part of a long and dreary process which since 1979-80 has caused the RSG per head to fall by 11 per cent. in Scotland, by 50·9 per cent. in Clackmannan and by 18·3 per cent. in Lothian, according to the Secretary of State's figures in a parliamentary answer?

Will the Secretary of State now accept, as his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment south of the border accepted at Question Time on 1 April, that there has been a deliberate Government policy to shift the burden of local services from the Exchequer to ratepayers, that Scottish ratepayers have been damagingly hit by that policy, and that Ministers have been reluctant to accept that fact?

Mr. Rifkind: Listening to the hon. Gentleman's protestations, one could be forgiven for not realising that this year we had the most generous RSG provision, with no change in the grant percentage, compared with many previous years. Precisely because local authorities, instead of passing on that benefit to their ratepayers, have chosen excessive growth in expenditure, it is necessary for me to come to the Dispatch Box today.

The hon. Gentleman spoke about the timing of the statement. He must know perfectly well that local authorities have often pressed for such statements to be made at the earliest possible date. For him to complain because we are able to make a statement at an early date shows that it is difficult to please him whatever one seeks to do.

The hon. Gentleman compared the penalties proposed this year with those for last year. However, he does not draw attention to the fact that this year we have increased public expenditure provision for local authorities by no less than 9·5 per cent. and that the guidelines for local authorities took account of their budgets last year which were then increased to take account of inflation, the teachers' pay settlement and other matters. For local authorities to respond with excessive expenditure in the light of that provision justifies a severe response. It is sad to reflect that when we imposed a heavy tariff there were reductions in excessive expenditure, but when, over the last year, we adopted a more gentle approach, followed by a generous RSG provision, the response from a number of local authorities was as we have described.

As for the individual authorities to which the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) referred, I remind him that Edinburgh district council is proposing expenditure which is no less than 24·7 per cent. in excess of its guidelines. Likewise, Clackmannan is 21 per cent. in excess of its guideline, which is by far the largest excess for district councils.

The hon. Member for Garscadden asked whether the penalty would be adjusted if authorities responded to what is being proposed and reduced their budgets. I am prepared to give consideration to that possibility.

The hon. Gentleman protested on behalf of Lothian regional council and implied that its proposals for a rates increase which verges on 30 per cent. is reasonable and not excessive. I remind the hon. Gentleman that Lothian regional council, despite improvements in its guideline, is £29·3 million in excess of its guideline. Its excess over assessed need is £61·5 million or 16·9 per cent. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman should reflect on the fact that if he lived in Edinburgh or Lothian he might not be so friendly towards Lothian as he presently feels able to be.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a private Members' day, so I ask for succinct questions.

Sir Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that his statement will be warmly welcomed in Edinburgh, particularly by the many ratepayers who are suffering severe hardship because of the imposition of a 30 per cent. rates increase by the Labour authorities? My right hon. and learned Friend said that, following these measures, the average domestic ratepayer will benefit by about £50. What benefits will accrue to small businesses in Edinburgh, such as shopkeepers, as a result of this action?

Mr. Rifkind: It is difficult to give an exact figure because the range of businesses varies. For example, a Princes street store may experience a reduction of as much as £60,000. Clearly that will have a significant impact for the good of the economy of the city, with corresponding benefits for employment in many stores. Other shops and businesses will benefit significantly, but the size of the benefit will depend on the size of the present rates demands.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Let me be more direct than the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). This announcement, which has been made on the day that the election has been announced, will be seen as blatant bribery which is designed to save the seats of Ministers and ex-Ministers in Edinburgh. If that is not true, it is designed to force Edinburgh city to give up the pensioners' free travel concession. What else is it for?

Is the Secretary of State aware that, despite what he said in the earlier part of his statement, the rate support grant settlement in the named rate-capped authorities was not generous? The right hon. Gentleman should have renegotiated the rate support grant levels with the authorities in question because what he is doing in mid-budgetary term will cause chaos and lead to drastic cuts in services.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman does not have the slightest basis for his final comment. He should know perfectly well that, when selective action has been taken in the past, not only has it not led to the predicted chaos —such predictions are always made on such occasions— but the ratepayers have benefited from repayments and the local authorities, which have made great protestations about the enormous hardship to the local community, have ended up with egg on their face.

Local authorities will have, as is normal, an opportunity to comment and make representations to the Scottish Office on these proposals. The Government have made it abundantly clear that they are prepared to take action to assist ratepayers and to deal with excessive and unreasonable expenditure. This is not the first year in which we have used or applied such powers. For the hon. Gentleman to impute other motives is unworthy of him.

Mr. Albert McQuarrie (Banff and Buchan): The generous RSG settlement that my right hon. and learned Friend announced earlier this year is appreciated, but is he aware that constituencies and district councils such as mine in Banff and Buchan find considerable difficulty in meeting the guidelines? Will my right hon. and learned Friend say that, if the district council in Banff and Buchan can get itself back into guideline during the course of this year, its ratepayers will benefit considerably from a repayment in the next year?

Mr. Rifkind: As I have announced today, we are repaying £20 million worth of rate support grant because in the course of the previous year some authorities were able to reduce their excess spending. In the case of my hon. Friend's district council, the excess over guideline is only 1·52 per cent., or about £81,000, so I very much hope that it will be able to recover any grant loss arising from that.

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): The Secretary of State is fond of saying that he has been generous to local government in rate support grant

[Mr. Norman Hogg]

settlement, but he has been directly challenged by my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) about whether his statement will in fact reduce overall rate support grant for the current financial year. Will the right hon. Gentleman now answer that point?

Secondly, as the Government have little mandate in the constituencies in which the authorities concerned operate and could not even field a full complement of candidates for those authorities, one wonders what authority the Secretary of State has for his excessive attack on them.

Mr. Rifkind: I am not clear what mandate the ruling councils in Edinburgh, Lothian or Clackmannan had for rates increases of the kind proposed. I do not recall those proposals being put to the electorate at the relevant time. As for the implications for rate support grant, I have today proposed reductions in grant for certain individual authorities, but whether they lose grant will depend entirely on how they respond. If they reduce their expenditure, there will be no reduction in grant. If they refuse to do so, they will have only themselves to blame.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that the Government provide more than half the cost of local government expenditure and that the provision was increased this year by more than double the increase in prices generally? Does he agree that his statement about the overspending authorities shows that so long as there is a rating system the Labour party will abuse it? Is that not an urgent reason to ensure that proceedings on the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill are completed before this Parliament ends?

Mr. Rifkind: I agree, of course, with my hon. Friend's final comment. With regard to his earlier remarks, I must point out that last year some 40 authorities were able to keep their expenditure within guidelines and suffered no loss through grant penalty. If about two thirds of the authorities could achieve that in a year in which the rate support grant settlement was less generous than this year, there is no excuse for those which have declined to move in the same direction.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Will the Secretary of State confirm that what he calls excess expenditure is adequate fire cover, a decent level of policing, a good staff-pupil ratio in schools, proper provision for the elderly and other vital services? Does he agree that his guidelines are entirely arbitrary and discriminatory and that there are no objective bases whatever for them, and does he admit that his announcement today picking on certain authorities has more to do with the sweaty palms that he and his hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Ancram), and his hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Sir A. Fletcher) have because they know that they are about to be replaced by Mark Lazarowicz, Nigel Griffiths and Alastair Darling respectively and that the House and the country will be better places as a result?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman will forgive me for reminding him of the time when he predicted that he would replace me as Member for Edinburgh, Pentlands. After an unsuccessful attempt to achieve that, the hon. Gentleman fled to his present constituency and was never seen again in the Scottish capital. If the hon. Gentleman is as confident as he claims to be, I am sure that my Labour opponent, Mr. Lazarowicz, will be happy to change places with him so that the hon. Gentleman himself can stand against me in my constituency.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware that in the past couple of weeks rate demands have been popping through the letter boxes in Tayside. Does he agree that if the Conservatives had remained in office the increase would have been about 2p but that it is substantially greater because the Labour party and the Scottish National party know only how to spend other people's money? Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that this makes it essential to change the way in which we fund local government and to keep control of profligate authorities?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is correct. Until we have a system of local authority finance in which all who benefit from local services make a contribution towards them through funds raised locally, we cannot expect to have genuine accountability. That is why we hope that the community charge legislation will be enacted in the course of this week, and why comparable proposals for England and Wales are being put forward by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): The Secretary of State should know that the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) got it wrong. The SNP had nothing to do with rate levels in Tayside.

Mr. Bill Walker: Its members voted to keep Labour in office.

Mr. Ross: Absolutely.

If the budget that was put forward before the election by the Tory administration on Tayside had been implemented, there would have been a massive reduction in services for which the council had not budgeted. Rather than announcing penalties today, would it not have made more sense for the Secertary of State to make a more positive response to Tayside regional council's request for £5 million for the water front project, which the Secretary of State claimed to support, so that it could have proceeded?

Mr. Rifkind: The way in which Tayside regional council uses the resources available to it and that council's priorites are a matter for it. Like other local authorities in Scotland, Tayside was the beneficiary of a generous rate support grant settlement, and of guidelines that were considerably in excess of its budget last year. I said earlier that overall provision to local authorities was 9.5 per cent. more than last year's. The hon. Gentleman should appreciate that local authorities that insist on overspending have only themselves to blame if they forfeit grant as a consequence.

Mr. Michael Hirst (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Will my right hon. and learned Friend remind the Opposition that, in spite of constant exhortations to restraint, local government spending in volume terms is higher today than in 1979? All my constituents are facing substantial rates increases because of Strathclyde council's continuing failure to live within its means and to apply Government guidelines to its expenditure.

Is it not true that Labour authorities mean high rates, and it is only when the community charge is introduced that we shall have the accountability that will stop that?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is entirely correct. Last year, local authority volume expenditure was, for the first time, below 1979 levels.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden is wrong.

Mr. Rifkind: He is not wrong. This year, as a response to the generous provision of rate support grant settlement, volume expenditure is now back again above 1979 levels, thereby illustrating that the high rates increases were not because of the inadequacy of Government support but because local authorities have chosen to go for growth in expenditure as a consequence of central Government support.

Mr. Martin J. O'Neill (Clackmannan): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that the cut in the rate support grant for Clackmannan comes at a time when it has been clawing its way into a position that is comparable with other authorities of similar size? It is the smallest authority in Scotland and suffers from the problems of diseconomies of scale. The bludgeon that the Minister is applying to that small authority this year will result in a massive cut in services at a time when the authority is trying to compensate for the follies of the Government's policies elsewhere in the economy.

Mr. Rifkind: I might have more sympathy for what the hon. Gentleman has said if I did not know that the Clackmannan district council was proposing growth in its leisure and recreation expenditure of no less that 75·5 per cent.

Mr. O'Neill: There is 25 per cent. unemployment there.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that there are other authorities in Scotland and elsewhere in the United Kingdom that have unemployment problems, but a proposed expenditure increase of that kind and in that area seems extraordinary. It is, of course, for Clackmannan to decide, within an overall total, what its priorities are, but I use that as an illustration of the difficulties that Clackmannan's ratepayers and others are facing.

Asylum Seekers (Heathrow)

3.59 pm

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the refusal of the Home Office to refer the refugee applications of 36 Iraqi Kurds held at terminal 2, Heathrow to the United Kingdom Immigration Advisory Service, the circumstances that led to suicide attempts by some of the asylum seekers, and their continued unauthorised detention."

Last weekend, three groups of 12 Iraqi-Kurdish people arrived at Heathrow airport. They escaped from Iraq into Syria and boarded a plane to the United Kingdom. They travelled on Iraqi passports. When they arrived at Heathrow, they sought political asylum at the airport and asked that their case be considered. The refusal of the immigration officers to grant them political asylum led to removal directions being placed on them to leave this country. I and other hon. Members attempted to put stops on their removal over the weekend, but our efforts were not successful.

There were then a number of protests by the Iraqi Kurds, including two suicide attempts that resulted in two of the Iraqi Kurds being taken to nearby hospitals while the remainder were held either at the police station at Heathrow or at the terminal 2 immigration office. They have not been removed from this country and they are still being held at the airport. They then requested through their friends that their case be referred to the United Kingdom Immigration Advisory Service. This request was denied by the immigration officers concerned, and the denial was confirmed by the Home Office by telephone calls to them today.

I realise that the House has many things to discuss this week, but I feel that this matter is extremely important. First, if these Iraqi Kurds are returned to Syria there is clearly a danger that they would be returned to Iraq, where they would be wanted by the Iraqi Government. This means that they would be put in enormous danger of their lives. Secondly, the immigration service at Heathrow airport — this should be a matter of great concern to Parliament — appears to be operating the terms of the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Bill in their entirety and in detail when that measure has not passed through all its stages in Parliament and has not received Royal Assent; and in the light of the business statement that we have heard today, it is unlikely that it will be passed into law this week. This calls into question the operation of the immigration service and the safety of the 36 Iraqi Kurds concerned.

A debate would give the Home Secretary the opportunity to explain to the House what his attitude is towards these genuine asylum seekers and whether he is prepared to consider their case individually, which he is bound to do within the terms of the 1951 Geneva convention, of which the United Kingdom is a signatory.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the refusal of the Home Office to refer the refugee applications of 36 Iraqi Kurds held at terminal 2, Heathrow

[Mr. Speaker]

to the UKIAS, the circumstances that led to suicide attempts by some of the asylum seekers, and their continued unauthorised detention."

I have listened with great concern to what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I regret that I do not consider the matter to be appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. Therefore, I cannot submit his application to the House.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the Value Added Tax (Construction of Buildings) Order 1987 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Lightbown].*

The Quality of Life

4.3 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): I beg to move,

That this House affirms the overwhelming need to improve the quality of life of millions of citizens in the United Kingdom by pursuing progressive policies for creating more jobs, expanding the National Health Service, increasing investment in housing and schools, and providing higher pensions; contrasts these objectives with the hidden agenda of the Conservative Party in relation to the extension of value-added tax, further contraction of health and social services, the imposition of a workfare scheme for the unemployed, and an accelerated withdrawal of the state from its rôle as a protector of the weak; and notes that these intentions will be carefully concealed from voters during the general election campaign, since their implementation would be seen as compounding the misery and widening the social divisions already inflicted upon the British people during the last eight years.

The House will have noted that a motion in the same terms appears on the Order Paper in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser). I am pleased to have won a place in the ballot because it means that I shall set the agenda in the House for the next three hours. That gives me the opportunity in the dying days of this Parliament to draw attention to the damaging and debilitating demeanour of this Tory Government that has diminished the quality of life for millions of people in our land. My winning of the ballot gives me the opportunity to present some of the alternative and progressive policies that the Labour party will be presenting in the forthcoming general election. Those policies will enhance the quality of life for our citizens and give hope for the future based on fairness and freedom rather than greed and injustice.

It is clear that the Prime Minister and the Conservative party and its cronies think that they will easily win the forthcoming general election. They are wrong.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): I am sorry to intervene at this early stage in the hon. Gentleman's speech, but I wonder whether he will be telling us during his speech why it is that the lowest quality of life and the deprivation that has ensued over the past four or five years has been mainly in Labour local authority areas—in fact, essentially in Labour local authority areas.

Mr. Cohen: Mainly because Conservatives just do not care about such areas and tighten the screws on them. I shall be dealing with such issues.

The Conservative party is wrong if it thinks that it will win the next general election easily. It may have the media and the bandwagon-inducing opinion polls sewn up and it may have an on-tick mini boom strictly for the duration of the election to try to fool the voters, but it will be unable to hide the truth.

There are already millions of victims of the Government's policies. There are 2·5 million families in England alone who are living in seriously substandard dwellings. There are 3·5 million who are unemployed. There are 4·5 million victims of recorded crime—in reality, there are over 8 million such victims. The total has increased by 50 per cent. as this allegedly law-and-order Government have steadily and increasingly lost control. There are 17 million people living in, or on the margins of, poverty. There are 10 million pensioners who have lost about £9 a week because the Government broke the Labour Government's pension rises formula. There are 50 million or more who rely solely on the National Health Service and who have seen it being eroded. A further Tory term in government would not be more of the same; it would be much worse. As William Keegan wrote in *The Observer* on 3 May,

> "At the very least, those who have paid the costs are entitled to share in whatever gains there prove to be in the end."

That is not the Government's attitude. A vote for a third term of Tory government will be regarded as a ringing endorsement of a policy to bash the victims even harder.

Let us be blunt. Another Tory Government would mean more factory closures, more hospitals being shut, more people left to rot on the dole, more made homeless and more condemned to poverty. This would happen in all sorts of ways and it is only right that the British people should know what is in store for them in the Tories hidden manifesto. For a start, there will be large rises in value added tax. The Conservatives said in 1979 that they had no intention of doubling VAT, but when they came into office they increased it immediately from 8 per cent. to 15 per cent.

In my view, VAT will soon be increased to 25 per cent. if the Tories are returned to office, and it will be harmonised with the EEC. That is what the Prime Minister's representative at the EEC, Lord Cockfield, is pressing for. That means VAT on food, children's clothes, shoes, heating and newspapers. It could mean as much as an additional £10 a week on the average family's bill. Especially hard hit will be the low taxpayer or non-taxpayer. He will pay a greater proportion of his income in taxation while the rich will pay less. Such a rise in VAT would inevitably increase inflation.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): Will the hon. Gentleman tell us from which authority this information comes? Will he quote his exact source so that we may verify it? None of us is aware of it.

Mr. Cohen: There has been a fracas at the European Parliament about it. Lord Cockfield has suddenly gone silent about it, but he has let his intentions be known. He favours harmonisation, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer made similar statements in *The Guardian* in February. I can give the hon. Gentleman the relevant date when I have resumed my seat. The Chancellor has talked about expanding the base for VAT, and that is one of the likelihoods.

There will be big increases in rents — probably as much as £12 a week for council tenants. Such increases will give the green light to private landlords to follow suit. As existing controls are weakened, Rachmanism and thuggery will re-emerge to scar the face of private landlordism.

Mortgage payers will witness a speedy return to high interest rates. Such interest rates have been the hallmark of Tory economic policy outside election periods. There will also be a new poll tax. However, the Conservatives have already increased rates for every family by £4 per week as a result of cuts in rate support grant and penalties imposed on local authorities and their ratepayers. In my borough of Waltham Forest, £40 million has been stolen in that way. On top of such penalties the new poll tax will mean additional charges of £4·17 for an average family and £6·32 for a pensioner couple.

Mr. Marlow: Come on!

Mr. Cohen: The hon. Gentleman may wish to make a comment, and I shall give him and his hon. Friends an opportunity to intervene if they are prepared to justify how a couple relying on a state pension and who live in a small home in my constituency must pay at the same level of rates as the Prime Minister and Denis in their fortress in Dulwich. Can they justify that? They are keeping quiet because it is unjustifiable.

Prescription charges have gone up twelvefold since 1979. That shows that there is no limit to Conservative callousness to tax the sick. A third Tory term will mean an extra £4 a week to cover the cost of school meals for a family with two children. Water rates have already increased unnecessarily above the rate of inflation, but they will rocket even further if water is privatised and run for profit.

Charges for buses and trains will also increase as the impact of privatisation and the halving of subsidies is felt. The electricity and gas industries will make up for holding back this year. They have kept their prices down as their contribution to the Conservatives' election efforts. However, in the earlier years of the Tory Administration their charges went up above the rate of inflation and hurt a lot of pensioners in the process.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I apologise to the hon. Gentleman for missing his opening remarks. I wonder whether he can explain what he is doing for his constituents who are suffering the imposition of a 62·8 per cent. rate increase. That increase is exceeded only by that of the long-suffering people of Ealing, who have faced a 65 per cent. rate increase. Is the hon. Gentleman aware that, when I was leading a march of some 4,000 people demonstrating against Ealing council's disgusting behaviour, there were also marches being held in his constituency? This is a serious state of affairs. Pensioners and disabled people in my constituency are continually in tears because they cannot pay the council's horrendous demands. Is not the position the same in his constituency?

Mr. Cohen: The hon. Gentleman was obviously not present when I spoke of the £40 million stolen by the Government as the result of cuts in rate support grant and penalties imposed on local authorities. I can prove that figure because I have a letter from the borough treasurer quoting it. I can give the hon. Gentleman a breakdown of that £40 million. When the cut in rate support grant was mooted in the House, I called for the Secretary of State for the Environment to do something to give back some of the money. He refused and displayed a callous indifference to the problem. That is the reality.

It is no good the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) or his hon. Friends pretending to be the champions of the ratepayers in my borough or in Ealing when the Government have stolen such sums of money. The Government are charging ratepayers £1·64 for every £1 spent by local authorities.

Mr. Greenway *rose*——

Mr. Cohen: I have answered the hon. Gentleman's question clearly and I will not give way.

The nation faces increased charges, and a 2p reduction in income tax pales in comparison to the pounds that will be taken from people in meeting their extra bills. The greedy stand to gain if the Tories win. The richest 5 per cent. of the land have already been given an extra £3·6

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billion a year. That is only a start. A blind eye will, once again, be turned towards selfish, anti-social speculation and big City fraud. The majority of people will be allowed their rights under the Tories only if they can afford to pay for them. Such is the Tory dream. It is a nightmare for the rest of us.

There will be a further rundown in the state education system. Vouchers will be introduced to speed the creaming off of resources and the school closure programme. On 8 May, *The Independent* referred to a recently issued Department of Education and Science circular which said that, by 1991, the authorities must close about 2,000 schools. Teachers and parents will be treated with even more contempt than they are at present. The majority of children will be confined to a less than fair start in life. Students will be given loans instead of grants. Higher education will be put further out of the reach of many youngsters because of the cuts.

Further cuts are planned for the local authorities and other public providers. Community care for the elderly, for people with disabilities and for those who would otherwise be institutionalised will become a myth. Such care will be rationed and will not be available in many parts of the country. Home helps and meals on wheels will not be provided.

Resources for the National Health Service will be cut and it will become more dependent on charity for life-saving equipment. Rail and bus routes all over the country will face the axe. The National Health Service and the health of the nation have been seriously damaged by the Conservative Government. More than 220 hospitals have been closed. The availability of hospital beds has fallen by more than 10 per cent. There has been a quicker turnover of patients. Patients are thrown out of hospital before they have received proper treatment and there is now a higher level of readmissions. Hospital waiting lists have increased by 14 per cent.

The National Health Service also faces a severe nursing crisis because of poor pay. On 1 May, the *Yellow Advertiser*, my local paper, referred to the nursing crisis and said:

> "Health chiefs fear the increase, which is above the rate of inflation, may be just a flash in the pan"—

that is all too true—

> "and not enough to attract more nurses to the district."

It reported that Waltham Forest has more than 700 vacancies for nurses on its books. Low rates of pay and working conditions have been blamed for these shortages. That paper fears that if staff problems get worse the quality of service given to patients could be badly affected. Operating time has already been restricted because of the shortage of theatre nurses. Before last week's rise, a fully trained staff nurse with three years' experience was earning £20 or £30 less than the national average.

It is no accident that Britain has gone to the top of the poor health league of countries in the industrialised world. We are at the top of the league for deaths from heart disease and Britain has a high incidence of cancer. The Tory rundown of the NHS is out of step with the needs of our people.

In addition, a number of independent reports have clearly stated the cause of the unnecessary deaths and incidence of ill health in Britain. The Church of England report "Faith in the City" and the Black report found that the most important determinants of ill health were poor housing, particularly in the devastated economies of the inner cities and the bleak housing estates of the outer cities, unemployment, and poor nutrition. There was evidence that poor families are forced to cut down on food to make ends meet. There was also evidence that a dangerous environment, particularly because of a lack of suitable play areas for children, leading to road accidents is the main cause of death among young people.

A report was produced by the Health Education Council, but it was stifled by the Government just a month ago. It contained damning, conclusive evidence against the Government. The poorer one is, the less healthy one is. The situation has got worse under the Government. People in lowly occupations are twice as likely to die before retirement than professional people. The babies of fathers who have unskilled jobs run twice the risk of stillbirth and death before their first birthday. The children of poor parents have lower birth rates, shorter stature and poorer health. Unemployed people have poorer health than those who are in work.

Last Friday, the BMA's science and education board working party produced a report on deprivation and ill-health. It was quoted in detail in *The Independent*. It stated:

> "Unemployment, poor housing, and low incomes are causing a substantial amount of ill-health for millions of people in Britain."

It went on to state:

> "Inequalities so severe as to give rise to pronounced effects on health seem to us indefensible."

That was stated by the BMA, not a politically-biased body.

The newspaper went on to outline the main factors:

> "Housing. Homes which are damp, cold and insanitary directly cause illnesses; overcrowding causes stress and anxiety which can lead to mental illness.
>
> Unemployment. The paper reports 'clear evidence' that unemployment is associated with higher mortality rates, and that unemployed people are more vulnerable to self-destructive behaviour, ranging from suicide to drug-taking. School leavers who went on the dole were found to have worse mental health than fellow-former pupils who found work, and . . . some psychiatric illness is directly caused by unemployment.
>
> Low income. DHSS figures show almost nine million people were living at or below the supplementary benefit income level in 1983."

The Government fiddled the later figures. They are substantially more than that. The article went on:

> "The unemployed and pensioners, in particular, find great difficulty in getting good housing and healthy food. They are forced to buy the cheapest and least nourishing foods and their children are reported to suffer under-nutrition, stunted growth, and health problems brought on by obesity"—

it is an obscenity—

> "caused by fatty food.
>
> Other areas of deprivation affecting health are poor education, which reduces an individual's chances of getting a better income, and racial discrimination, which forces people into accepting poorer housing and income."

The report went on to urge that more money

> "should be spent on housing, financial support for low-income groups, health education and reorganising the NHS so that it was more accessible to the deprived."

The Government will have to answer to that report in the general election. It will certainly become an important issue.

I am concerned about diet. I have raised the matter before in the House. I presented a petition for action for a healthier diet. It is well known what is induced by a poor diet. Factors include excess fat, sugar, salt, lack of fibre, and food additives. Those factors have been put on record by medical experts, but the Government have done nothing. They have not even introduced the most minimal labelling. They are in the pockets of the farmers, the sugar industry and chemical companies. That is why the Tories are incapable of tackling that cause of ill health.

To improve the health of the nation, we need action that only a Labour Government can provide. We need preventive health measures to combat the causes of ill health. The report referred to low incomes, high unemployment, bad housing and poor environment, improved diets with higher nutritional standards, informative food labelling, and fewer additives being allowed, and health education being set up in a realistic way to help to promote a healthier lifestyle.

We need a charter for women's health so that there is a computerised call and recall system for screening breast and cervical cancer in every health authority area. The results of such tests should be properly conveyed to the women concerned. Every woman should have the right to a regular check-up. Labour will promote a network of well woman clinics, more family planning clinics and increased access to women doctors.

We should improve family doctors' services so that we can reduce the size of doctors' lists and ensure that they have more time for in-patients. We should encourage local family health care teams so that family doctors, nurses, health visitors and other professionals can work together in the community. Above all, there should be at least 3 per cent. investment in the NHS each year so that we can fund the repair and replacement of outdated hospital buildings, cut waiting lists, and train and recruit more doctors, nurses and other health staff to improve treatment and pay them better than the current nurses' poverty wages. That programme is in stark contrast with what the Tories have done for the health of the nation.

The number one issue in the general election will be unemployment. The Tories will try to avoid it as much as they possibly can, but the truth is that they cannot—they will not—reduce unemployment. They may reduce the figures. So far, there have been 19 figure fiddles. About 500,000 unemployed people are no longer accounted for. If elected, the Tories will probably abolish the unemployment register and replace it with a vague employment census. For them, the advantages would be that the unemployed would officially no longer exist.

I have referred to the likelihood of the introduction of United States-style workfare schemes. Does the Minister wish to give way?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): No; the hon. Gentleman gives way.

Mr. Cohen: I shall gladly do so in a moment.

The United States-style workfare schemes could include ending teenagers' rights to supplementary benefit, stripping the DHSS or so-called services of any welfare duty towards the unemployed and imposing work tests, including forced labour for thousands who register for the dole. It would be conscription by any other name—conscription to training schemes—otherwise they would lose their benefit. From there it is a short step to "no work, no dole" schemes, even though there is no work.

Mr. Trippier: How many times do we have to tell the hon. Gentleman that my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment, my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister for Employment and I have said repeatedly in the House and outside that we have not the slightest intention of introducing a workfare scheme? All hon. Members can put their hands on their hearts and say that the hon. Gentleman is simply scaremongering.

Mr. Cohen: I wish that I could believe the Minister. We must read the small print in such matters. The country and the House have been misled before. Ministers have said, "We have no intention of introducing such a scheme at the moment." *[Interruption.]* Yes, they have. Of course they have no such intention at the moment because there will be a general election and they do not want their plans to be rumbled into the open.

There is no work for many who suffer. The number of people out of work is seven times greater than the number of vacancies. Workfare will cut jobs for other workers. The BBC's "Panorama" programme found that, in one United States town, 12 out of 16 people working in the local police station were workfare placements, including a workfare cop. The "Panorama" programme also showed that workfare undercuts wages quite substantially.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman has been more than generous in giving way and I hope that my interventions are not upsetting him. Why is it that in large areas of London—Labour-controlled local authority areas—up to 30 per cent. of males under the age of 24 are unemployed, yet the capital is overflowing with work opportunities and many employers cannot get people to work?

Mr. Cohen: The hon. Member obviously did not listen to what I said. I had just made the point that the number of people out of work is seven times greater than the number of vacancies. That is also the case in the capital. In addition, the Government have forced down salaries to such a low level that people cannot afford to work for those poverty wages. People would be thrown into even more poverty on those wages.

The Government may introduce some sort of workfare scheme, even though they may not call it that, aimed at making people work off benefits — for example, do unpaid socially useful work in return for social security payment. But the cost of enforcing and administering those schemes is far more than the social value of the work done. Such schemes contain little or no training and give no help to persons to find permanent jobs.

Workfare workers are also forced to do dangerous work or lose their benefits. Similarly if they leave a job because of race or sexual discrimination, or refuse a job because it does not fit in with their child care arrangements, they could also lose benefit. They have no employment rights. If the Government move in any way in that direction, that would be a terrible and retrograde step. I believe that the Government will do that.

We need proper jobs and good basic training instead of such schemes. The country knows that Labour has the best policies to create jobs and to tackle unemployment. We are committed to creating more than 1 million jobs in the first two years of coming to power. The key to job creation is investment in industry to boost the manufacturing that has been so savaged by the Government so that we can again

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have quality goods made in Britain and an investment bank to halt the flood of money that is going abroad. Under the Government £96 billion has gone abroad.

Labour is committed to direct state investment in jobs by central Government and by municipal enterprise, and investment in construction so that we can build homes, hospitals and schools and rebuild the nation's infrastructure—its roads, railways and sewers. We are committed to investment in the community to help people in the NHS, education, transport, social services and child care. That is a much better programme than any phoney workfare scheme that the Government will put forward.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman is complaining about outward investment. I take it that he would be very happy to welcome inward investment from other countries into the United Kingdom. How can he welcome inward investment while at the same time not allow outward investment?

Mr. Cohen: The speculative movement of hot capital does nothing but close down factories. I want to see that £96 billion invested in jobs in this country. The money is needed for that. Labour has the best policies to create jobs. I hope that some of my colleagues and comrades will mention the other progressive policies we need and that Labour offers. We need peace in our schools and higher quality education. We need to build and improve homes for people, not have the relentless dilapidation and homelessness which the Tories' 70 per cent. cutback in housing has produced. We need to improve the standard of living and quality of life of pensioners. We need to stop the 40,000 unnecessary hypothermia deaths which occur every winter because of high fuel costs and poverty in retirement.

We do not want nuclear expansion and our countryside desecrated. We do not want property speculation allowed in our green belts or in our inner cities. We want clean air and clean beaches. We want an end to lead in petrol. We want Britain to adopt international standards to control and combat acid rain so that our forests, rivers and seas are protected from irreparable damage. Under the Government we are the dirty men of Europe in terms of pollution.

Those are just some of the policies that a Labour Government would implement to improve the quality of life for millions of our fellow citizens. Those policies derive from better quality values for a better quality future. Contrast that with the "get rich quick, make a quick buck" approach of the Tories as illustrated by their one-off sales of national assets such as British Telecom and Rolls-Royce. What value has the quick buck when people live blighted and shortened lives because of deliberate neglect in the provision of public services? The few bob made by the Rolls-Royce shareholders will not stop many of them perhaps dying unnecessarily early from heart disease because the Government will not act, or suffering from cancer because of inadequate environmental controls, or suffering from kidney disease because the NHS is underfunded. That few bob will not stop people being part of an increasingly nasty and divided country. Those people may become victims of rising crime as a consequence.

In the article in *The Observer* of 3 October, William Keegan said:

> "The Conservatives promote the worst instincts in individuals and society. They have taken a positive delight in nurturing selfishness and greed and have made 'care' into a dirty word."

That is the case. The Tories have poisoned values and ideals, which leads to a poisoned environment and a poisoned society. Labour offers a better way forward and a better quality of life. Sensible people will vote Labour.

4.37 pm

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): I do not think that many of us will read *Hansard* tomorrow after hearing the speech of the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) without a real sense of wonderment because it is obvious that he does not live on the same planet or in the same world as any of us. It is a world and a planet that he wishes existed because it is only on a planet such as was described by the hon. Gentleman that his wicked schemes and the wicked ways that he seeks to impose on the British people would ever have a chance of succeeding.

I remind hon. Members of what my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) on 5 March 1987:

> "You have no policies that the country needs or wants. You know that our policies are needed and wanted. Your only hope is to pretend that those policies are other than what they are. You deceive no one."

The hon. Gentleman, in that catalogue of grotesque distortions and in that fabric of innuendo and shambles, tried to perpetrate on the House a Goebbels-style exercise in black propaganda. Even on the day that a general election has been announced, it was a disgraceful speech by any standards, even by those of the loony and militant Left which he represents. It was a contemptible speech on a matter of great concern and importance. I do not know how the hon. Gentleman has the nerve to make such a speech when he represents thousands of constituents whose local authorities have just imposed a 62·8 per cent. rate rise upon them.

The other night 8,000 people marched on Waltham Forest town hall to express their utter contempt and real anger about the fact that the hon. Gentleman and his cronies should have sought to impose a rate increase. I do not know how the hon. Gentleman has the nerve to come here and lecture my hon. Friends on the provision of care and services, because he will sting every family in that constituency with a 62·8 per cent. rate increase. His nerve is beyond comprehension. His constituents must be praying for release from the long nightmare of Socialist ideology being suffered by those in Lambeth, Brent and Waltham Forest.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Before the hon. Gentleman leaves the subject of Waltham Forest and its rates rise, may I ask him whether it would not be more helpful to the House if he told us exactly how much money in rate support grant has been removed from the London borough of Waltham Forest since 1979? I understand it is about £40 million. Does he not agree that if that money had not been removed from the ratepayers of Waltham Forest by his Government, the very large rate rises that have been imposed to pay for the services that are needed by the people of that area would not be necessary? Those who marched on Waltham Forest town hall would be better employed marching on the Department of the Environment in Marsham street.

Mr. Soames: The answer to every point made by the hon. Gentleman is no. The hon. Gentleman paints a view of Britain that is fanciful beyond words. He parachuted from cloud-cuckoo-land into this Chamber today and, like so many of his hon. Friends, he parachuted from the sort of dream world that he occupies with a number of others. They are divorced from the realities of life, and as they chew the barbed wire of Socialism they would do well to reflect that the people of Britain will not be conned in the next few weeks. The arguments will be clearly laid before the people and they will have the opportunity yet again to reject the dreadful and wicked programme proposed by the hon. Member for Leyton. He knows quite well that that programme would do nothing to resolve any of the serious problems that remain to be dealt with in some of the inner city areas.

It would be folly for us to claim or to think that everything in the garden is lovely and that everything is perfect. Of course it is not. It will be no part of the Conservative party's case at this general election to say that we have resolved every outstanding problem, but the foundations are well laid for the resolution of all the serious problems that this country faces.

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Soames: No, I will not give way.

It is because we have so many difficulties to overcome that we approach them with common sense and real compassion and not with the dribbling, whining crocodile tears of the Opposition or the lunatic meanderings of the absurd Left.

The main topic of this debate is the quality of life of our citizens. Like the power of a nation, the quality of life depends upon the primacy of economic success. *[Interruption.]* It does not depend at all on where one was born.

The record of growth in the United Kingdom is outstanding. It is one of the highest in the world. Britain has topped the European Community league table for growth since 1982. In the 1960s and 1970s our growth rate was the lowest of all the major European economies. Since 1980, the growth in United Kingdom manufacturing productivity has been the highest of the seven major industrial countries. In the 1960s and 1970s it was the lowest.

Manufacturing output has increased by 10·5 per cent. since 1983 and over the same time manufacturing investment has increased by 20 per cent. I am well aware that to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) and to his friends on the more absurd Left of the Labour party these figures are meaningless. To the hon. Gentleman they show no measure of success and no increase in prosperity. They show no raising of the conditions of the people throughout the length and breadth of Britain. However, they are facts that cannot be denied and we cannot be asked to be partial about the facts.

As I say, manufacturing investment has increased by 20 per cent. That is a triumph and should be wholeheartedly welcomed by the Opposition. The real take-home pay of a married man on average earnings with two children has increased by 21·6 per cent. since 1978-79 and by 18·3 per cent. since 1982-83. Growth in the non-oil economy is forecast to be 3·5 per cent. in 1987. Despite the fall in oil revenues of £7·5 billion from their 1985-86 level, in his 1987 Budget my right hon. Friend the Chancellor was able to announce a £2·5 billion programme for a cut in taxation, with the basic rate of income tax falling from 29 per cent. to 27 per cent. I have no doubt that the electorate will view with interest the fact that the Opposition parties voted against that cut. At the same time the Chancellor managed to produce a £4·75 billion increase in public spending in priority areas such as the National Health Service, about which we have heard little commendation from the Opposition. He also announced a £3 billion reduction in the public sector borrowing requirement.

Before the last election, I recall that the right hon. Gentleman who is a great magician with the language, the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), said that no British firm could be certain of remaining solvent over the next two years. Like so many of his forecasts and like so many of the forecasts made by his right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook who has taken to the kind of magical forecasts that we used to hear, they have ceased to have any credibility. It is a case of he who cries "wolf" last. They have gone on crying wolf but nobody believes them.

As I have said, it is no part of our case that the situation is perfect, but gigantic strides have been made in the modernisation of British industry. Wherever one goes in the United Kingdom and whereever people of good will choose to analyse and look and want to see, they will see a real renaissance in the power of Britain as a manufacturing country. They will see it as a country to which economic success means primacy, and that is deeply important to the interests of all our people.

I shall now turn to the National Health Service.

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): I listened with great interest to what the hon. Gentleman said about the Government's economic record. Why did he not refer to unemployment, to the decline in manufacturing industry and to the loss of jobs in that industry, and why did he not speak about the deficit in manufacturing trade?

Mr. Soames: I hope to come to those topics, so perhaps the hon. Gentleman can contain himself. I know that my speech is moving along at some speed, but I intend to detain the House for some time yet. I hope to come to some of the points made by the hon. Gentleman and to answer them, I hope to his complete satisfaction. However, because of his request and before dealing with the National Health Service I shall happily deal with industrial relations and employment. *[Interruption.]* We talk about these things in different ways, but employment means jobs.

I say again to the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr Fatchett) something that I know he finds hard to understand. Economic success pays for all the wonderful services that we provide for people who in many ways are extremely unfortunate. I think that the hon. Gentleman knows that I share many of his concerns about the high level of unemployment. Unemployment will never be cured by a backward-looking economy that is wallowing in the slough of a Socialist despond. Unemployment will be cured for ever only by a vibrant, growing economy that is expanding, has confidence and is capable of garnering to itself all the new opportunities, ideas, horizons and investment that will create the new jobs that we shall badly need in future.

[Mr. Soames]

Let me make some specific points about unemployment. In March 1987, unemployment stood at 3,042,000—11 per cent. of the working population. That was an increase of 156,000 on the June 1983 level. Unemployment has fallen by nearly 180,000 in the past eight months. That is the fastest drop since 1973, and it is an important step forward. It is very good news, and I know that Opposition Members will welcome it.

Unemployment is definitely on the decline. However, we shall never resolve the problem as long as uncertainty hangs over the country about the possibility of a Labour Government ever again being elected. They would destroy the economy, bring back high inflation and demolish the fabric of improvement for the platform from which we are taking off for economic recovery.

Employment has risen by over 1 million since March 1983. That increase is greater than those in the European Community countries combined. It sticks ill in the gullet of Opposition Members not to congratulate the Government on the real progress being made on unemployment, although we are taking into account that we still have a long way to go.

Mr. Rob Hayward (Kingswood): I know that my hon. Friend is a well-read man. No doubt he has read the recent OECD report, which analyses employment rates in different OECD member countries. Will he remind the House that, for the first time in OECD statistics, the British unemployment rate is now below that of the French? That is a further indication of the progress that we are making on employment.

Mr. Soames: It is kind of my hon. Friend to remind the House of that important figure. There is no doubt that we have made gigantic strides, for which the Opposition have not given the Government proper credit. Of course, that does not mean that there is not a tremendous amount of ground to cover, but we are past the foothills of dealing with the unemployment problem. We can now see the horizon, and the opportunities that lie ahead.

It is interesting to note how much self-employment has grown. It has increased by more than 750,000 since June 1979. I suspect that the increase would be even larger if all the figures were completely accurate, and if we were not so conservative in our accounting. Youth unemployment has fallen by 120,000 over the past two years and, as my hon. Friend pointed out, the percentage rate is much lower than the EEC average. Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the north of England stand not at 30 per cent., but 13·7 per cent., 18·6 per cent. and 15·7 per cent. respectively. Unemployment is falling in all regions across the United Kingdom.

I must repeat that it is no part of my case that the work is finished yet. This is a serious matter which is of great concern to the Government, as is evidenced by the enormous amount of work that they have done. Even having regard to the partiality, and the requirement for partiality inherent in our system, it is a pity that the Opposition do not work together more with the Government to bring about a reduction in unemployment. But, as I have said, the first precondition for fuller employment is for the economy never again to be run by a Socialist Government. We all know of cases—there are two in my constituency—of major foreign-owned corporations delaying substantial inward investment in this country until they are positive that there is no chance of a Labour Government being returned.

Let me now deal with the smears—I can describe them as nothing less—and the black propaganda—I am sorry; I must not use the work "black"—of the hon. Member for Leyton about the National Health Service. What he said really proved to all of us beyond peradventure that the hon. Gentleman is, frankly, a bit barmy. He talks of enormous hospitals being closed, but he does not mention the new hospitals that have been opened. He did not mention that between 1978-79 and 1985-86 there was an increase of 31 per cent. in real terms in capital spending on the NHS. It fell by 31 per cent. under the stewardship of the last Labour Government. That is a contemptible record. It does not lie in the mouth of the hon. Gentleman to criticise the Government about the enormous increases in expenditure on the NHS, which needs continuing high expenditure of public money, and a real commitment to improved management so that a better service can be delivered to those who use it.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Soames: Of course.

Mr. Rowe: My hon. Friend may wish to note that, as a direct consequence of the courageous decision to close a small hospital in my constituency, it has been possible to find no less than £35 million to invest in the district general hospital. That means that my area will now have a teaching arm of the NHS, which would have been inconceivable if the campaigns led by the Opposition to keep the old hospital open had succeeded.

Mr. Soames: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who has cited only one of the many examples that all of us could give of the prudent and sensible management instilled into the NHS. However, we shall need to go a great deal further to provide better hospitals, better services and better paid people in the hospitals to give the patients those better services. It is interesting to recall that only recently the Labour party, in its relentless drive for an Italian-style marketing campaign, was unable to find an empty hospital ward to photograph in London. It had to scour London before it eventually found one.

Mr. Michie: I shall stick to the point about the NHS being safe and everything going marvellously. Although there has been a slight drop in the waiting list in my area, it has been calculated that it would take 34 years to clear it. Is that a good record? I should have thought that it was appalling.

Mr. Soames: It is not for me to comment on the management of the National Health Service in Sheffield. However, I have no doubt that the hon. Gentleman will make sensible, practical and comradely suggestions to those who run the service in Sheffield to find a way of ameliorating the sad position there.

I have prefaced everything that I have said by pointing out that it is no part of our claim that everything is perfect. How could it be, in such a vast organisation? However, to portray the NHS as the hon. Member for Leyton did is to insult those who provide the service, those who work in it and all of us who pay for it. It is a terrible condemnation of the Opposition that they cannot fight the election without immediately embarking on an appalling campaign of black propaganda to run down an NHS that has been transformed beyond all recognition.

No fewer than 100 new hospital schemes are planned for completion between 1979 and 1989. That is a remarkable number. Notwithstanding the hon. Gentleman's black propaganda, total expenditure on the NHS has increased under the Tory Government from £7·75 billion in 1978 — the last year of Labour Government—to £18·9 billion in 1987. It is beyond me how he can pretend to make a credible and comprehensive case when those figures alone are taken into account. They constitute an increase of 26 per cent. in real terms, and expenditure is planned to reach nearly £20 billion in 1987-88. I only hope that the hon. Gentleman's constituents, when they come to make up their minds by themselves in those quiet boxes, will remember that when the last Labour Government were in power they cut capital expenditure by 31 per cent. across the board. That is a disgraceful record. There are 70,000 more doctors and nurses than there were in 1979 and 4·5 million patients are being treated. Since 1979, nurses' pay has increased in real terms by 23 per cent.

The quality of life must depend on the economic success of the country. The primacy of economic success has enabled this Government to pay a dividend in the form of substantially increased public expenditure in the priority areas. That is how it should be. Public money must be directed to those areas where it is truly needed, including the National Health Service. It can be no part of our case that all these matters have been happily resolved and that unemployment is not a serious problem. Everybody wants unemployment to be greatly decreased. No Government is doing more than we are trying to do to resolve the unemployment problem, but it will be resolved only by allowing industry and the economy to flourish, prosper and expand. That will produce a higher and more agreeable quality of life for all our people.

5.1 pm

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): I shall not make as grand or as long a speech as that of the hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames). Since I became a Member of Parliament in 1983 I have heard the Government praise themselves for their management of the economy. The hon. Member for Crawley referred to the Government's economic success. However, economic success in Sheffield means that well trained and skilled engineers and steel workers will never work again. They are having to sell their homes because they cannot afford to keep up their mortgage payments. They have invested their working lives in the economy of this country. Many of them also risked their lives for the safety of this country in the 1939-45 war.

Rates have always been said to be the real problem. That point has been made more than once in Standing Committee on subjects such as social security and local government, but the fact that industry has not been given proper Government backing has been a major factor in the closure of factories. The unit costs at British Steel in Sheffield were just as high as those in Rotherham, which has a much lower rate. Therefore, it cannot be argued that rates are the main issue. Industry's energy costs have never been subsidised to the same extent as those of our foreign competitors. However, the Government ignore that fact for their own political purposes. Industry in Sheffield has been sacrificed for economic expediency, with the result that our proud and skilled workers will never work again.

The economic success that has been praised by the Government has led to an estimated 4 million children living at starvation level. Millions of families do not live any better now than some of them did in the 1930s. Those who are struggling to bring up their families walk past miles and miles of dereliction. Apart from the fact that they are on the scrapheap, the factories in which they used to work have been bulldozed in Sheffield and elsewhere in the north, as well as in the midlands. Is that economic success? The Government say that public expenditure has increased, but we are spending more on unemployment and crazy employment schemes than we are on industrial investment. When the Opposition come to power, we shall certainly invest in industry.

I do not understand how the Government can hold their heads up high and say that they have helped the National Health Service. The hon. Member for Crawley said that the Government are proud of what they have done for the NHS, but nurses tell me that they are disillusioned and fed up and that they are doing their best under very difficult circumstances. When I went to one hospital to talk to the nurses, I wanted to have my photograph taken with them — which any Member of Parliament would do in his constituency—but the nurses could not come out of the hospital; the health authority did not like the idea, because of the pressure that central Government are putting on the NHS. Everybody is frightened to death. Dictatorship by central Government is becoming a real issue and a fact of life.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) referred to the low standard of housing. Since the war, 96,000 council houses have been built in Sheffield. Many of them need to be repaired, but that is impossible because grants have been cut. That is reducing the quality of life of those who depend on local authorities to provide housing for them. That is not an act of God. It is the act of a Government who do not care about those who need to be cared for. They no longer care whether there is suffering, or whether the housing is bad. They have written off certain groups of the population because they are not politically useful to them. They look after the City and their rich friends. They do not give a damn for those who really need help.

The Labour party may be accused of being impractical, but when I am on the hustings I shall say that the Labour party is the only alternative to the Conservative party and that it is the only party that is prepared to stick out its neck and defend the defenceless.

The elderly have worked all their lives and made great contributions to the economy through their taxes and their rates. Many of them fought for and defended their country. After having brought up families, they are now worse off than they have been for many years. If the Government do not believe what I say, I must live on a different planet. In Sheffield, there is among the elderly poverty of a kind that has never been known in my lifetime. It has been brought about by the deterioration in the level of pensions and other benefits. The elderly no longer have the privilege of decent and cheap transport. The social services are under tremendous pressure because of the cuts in local authority grants. The cost of caring for the elderly is increasing but the ratepayer has to pay for it. Sheffield's administration will continue, however, to

[Mr. Bill Michie]

take the Government's brickbats. We are prepared to stand by our record, and people will make their views known in the ballot box. Sheffield's record was vindicated in the local elections, and I hope that it will be vindicated in the general election.

It is unusual for me not to prepare a speech, but I did not have to do so on this motion. I know what has happened in the past few years. The people whom I represent were once very proud, in the sense that they had decent homes and provided for their children and their own parents. Now many are on the breadline and suffering. If they have jobs to go to, they are frightened of losing their jobs. They can no longer speak their mind for fear of losing their jobs. That is not democracy. That is economic pressure put upon people who have only the Labour party to represent them and fight for them.

As a Member of the House and prospective parliamentary candidate, I refuse to compromise in any shape or form on this matter. We are a rich country; the problem is that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. In some parts of the country I see yachts and affluence; in my constituency I see poverty. There is no moral justification for that state of affairs and the only way out of it is to look after those who need help instead of filling the coffers of the City and the rich.

5.10 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): The hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Mr. Michie) describes a country that I do not recognise.

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): That is the trouble.

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman should wait to hear what people have to say before intervening from a sedentary position.

As I was saying, the hon. Member for Heeley described a country that I did not recognise. For example, the hon. Gentleman must know—I know because I have a much larger than average pensioner population in my constituency—that the majority of pensioners no longer depend on the basic pension but have incomes from a variety of sources. Some of the money comes from the taxpayer—for example, in the form of assistance with housing and heating—and that is how it should be in a caring society. Those in need should have public funds targeted towards them, and that is exactly what the Government have done during the past eight years.

We have been a prudent Government in that we recognise that there is a limit to the extent to which we can tax people without adverse effects. We know that if we spend above prudent limits, raging inflation will result and we will have to borrow money. In what happened under the last Labour Government we have marvellous evidence to convince us of that. For example, some of us remember vividly the winter of discontent. The debate is about the quality of life. What quality of life could there be when we were not even burying our dead? Those are our memories of the last Labour Government. It was not a Tory Government but that Labour Government who savagely cut expenditure on all local services. They savagely reduced National Health Service expenditure and abolished many of the expenditure programmes. That was our inheritance.

We recognised that, unless we were prudent, we could certainly never be caring, because one can be caring only if one has the resources. We set about generating those resources. The hon. Member for Heeley talked about his lifetime. I cannot recall in my lifetime a Chancellor of the Exchequer being told before a Budget in which areas to reduce his expenditure—because he was going to give back taxes. In the past the chat has always been about the areas in which taxes will increase, not about the areas in which they will fall. That is what is new. We can be prudent and we can be caring which is important because we now have the resources.

My hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames), in his magnificent speech, said that the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) had parachuted into the Chamber from cloud-cuckoo-land. As one who knows a little about flying, may I suggest that parachuting is a risky business, particularly with a parachute that is not viable? The hon. Gentleman's programme is neither viable nor realistic and he must know that. When the flaws in one's parachute are exposed, one hits the ground with a terrible thud, and that is exactly what will happen to the hon. Gentleman and the Labour party at the next general election, when the flaws in their programme are examined and exposed.

Mr. Cohen: My feet are always firmly on the ground. The Labour party is very keen to have its programme thoroughly examined. We only hope that the press will examine it fairly and recognise that it meets our people's needs.

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman is wise to say that he will keep his feet on the ground. The evidence that he has presented suggests that he does not do his research carefully enough or conduct his pre-flight operations properly. In all flying, the end result of that is a crash and that is the likely outcome of the hon. Gentleman's programme.

I remind the House that I am proud to represent part of highland Scotland. Hundreds of thousands like to visit highland Scotland on vacation and I hope that they will continue to do so because they are vital to our economy. Many of them, on seeing what we have in our part of the country, say, "My goodness me! I like this." They try to come back and, more important, many of them decide to stay, and we welcome them. That would hardly be our experience if there was anything in our quality of life to deter them. Or could it be that we have lovely mountains and scenery and splendid fishing and recreational facilities? I think not. We have many of the other things that go to make up the quality of life. For example, the Tayside part of the Health Service must be about the finest in the United Kingdom. The hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) and I know that because we were both customers last year. We were both critically ill in ward 11 of Nine Wells hospital in Dundee. At the time we tried not to tell anyone but it is no longer a secret so we can now tell the public at large just how ill we were. As a result of the dedication and motivation of the nurses, doctors and all the other staff at Nine Wells hospital, the hon. Gentleman and I are living examples of the effectiveness of the Health Service. I deplore those who knock our Health Service. Rather than going in for all this theoretical nonsense, they should find out for themselves by sampling at first hand just how good and dedicated are the staff of the National Health Service. The Health Service is in fine hands, and I am delighted with the quality of the staff.

As I said, we are a prudent and caring Government—caring, because we direct aid towards those in need. *[Interruption.]* I notice that some Labour Members find that humorous. I remind them that during the last eight years we have introduced measures to help the disabled and have given pensions to those of an age at which people previously did not receive them. We have deliberately targeted those in the greatest need and have brought in new measures to help them. I am not afraid to stand on a public platform in my constituency or anywhere else to defend my Government's record. From the shambles that we inherited from the Labour Government, we have produced a quality of life of which I am proud.

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Walker: I am always delighted to give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Haynes: When the hon. Gentleman is on that platform, will he tell the people who are listening that Conservative Members were whipped in here on a Friday morning to vote down a private Member's Bill that was to help the disabled much more than they are being helped at present? Will the hon. Gentleman tell those people that the Conservative party did that?

Mr. Walker: I have no difficulty in answering that question. If the hon. Gentleman was here then—I am sure that he was—and if he had listened to the debate, he would have heard the Minister say that we applauded the introduction of those measures and that we would do what we have always said we would do and fund them as and when we judged that the resources were available. Those are exactly the policies about which I was talking—prudent and caring. We do not promise things and not deliver. What we promise, we deliver.

The hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) knows that he is a member of a party that made promises and did not deliver. The Labour party made promises in 1974, but two years later had to go to the IMF and had to renege on its promises. That is why the Labour Government cut the Health Service and local authority expenditure and why we inherited problems. The Labour party has always had plans and policies that it cannot implement. The history of every Labour Government has been one of making promises and plans that they cannot implement. If a Government are prudent and caring, they tell the people the truth. They say, "Yes, we want to help you. Yes, we will help you, as and when we make sure that the funds are available." More important, we have made sure that the revenue implications of our measures can be met. Any fool can make promises if he thinks that he will never have to deliver.

I am not ashamed of the quality of life in the part of Scotland that I represent and I am not afraid to stand on a political platform to defend it. Our local schools are splendid. Our little village schools have a long record of which we are proud. They have produced some of the finest citizens and the best scholars. There is no doubt that we should continue to nurture what is important—the wealth creators.

One of our great difficulties has been the failure of the Opposition and others to recognise that we are living in a period of change which is almost as great as the change that occurred during the industrial revolution. The old smokestack industries which were labour-intensive are disappearing world wide, and we must face that fact. It has had to be faced not only by the steelworks in Britain but throughout Europe. It is interesting that our steelworks are competing with and beating the opposition because our productivity is better, because the essential decisions that will make them function effectively and profitably in the world have been taken. Even the Swedes, who are noted for their caring attitudes, recognised that they could no longer have shipyards and therefore had to close them.

What we are living through is not unique to Britain. It is the same throughout the industrial world.

Mr. Michie *rose*——

Mr. Walker: I shall give way later.

We must recognise that jobs can and will be created in different industries because the employment of the future may be different. I mention my constituency because tourism is the largest single employer there. It is important that we recognise that many of the jobs of the future will come from the service sector. That will call for enlightened thinking by planners who will have to recognise that we are not living in an age when all the jobs are in the old-style mills and factories. I often think that, if we had planners then, we would never have had mills and factories, because they would never have allowed them. But now the planners are trying to keep them, which is interesting.

We must take the attitude that the service sector will provide jobs. The attitude of planners must be constructive. I hope that the problems in the county town of Forfar will not be repeated elsewhere. The local planning authority in Forfar is telling one of the local garages that it cannot have the standard Nissan sign displayed on the garage. About 40,000 outlets in the United Kingdom display that sign, but the Forfar garage cannot. That type of nonsense will destroy jobs. That attitude must be changed.

We are living in a period of great challenge. The challenge to the Government is that they must continue with their same prudent and caring policies—prudent policies on expenditure and caring policies in channelling expenditure towards those in greatest need. Only in that way will we ensure that there is not a tax burden that cripples the wealth creators and that will make it impossible for us to fund all the programmes that we would like. Effective taxation means that we are getting so much money from value added tax and corporation tax. That is the direct result of effective, prudent policies.

Mr. Michie: I should like to return to the hon. Gentleman's earlier point that industry has to change. It has had to change throughout the world, and I do not think that any Opposition Member disagrees. But we are concerned about the rate and percentage of change. Of course, the steel and engineering industries had to modernise and, to some extent, reduce their size, but the rate of change has been disastrous. With the Government's co-operation, 50 per cent. of steel jobs in the European Community have been lost, so the Government's policy has been unfair in that sense.

Mr. Walker: It is only because we did all the right things in time that our steel industry is where it is. My fear is that the British steel industry could have gone the same

[Mr. Walker]

way as the Swedish shipyards. That probably would have happened if we had not taken action in time. Anyone who has been involved in management knows that difficult decisions are not easy to take and that, if one delays taking them the business may have to go into receivership. We are faced with that type of problem throughout the United Kingdom. I welcome this debate. I invite anyone who doubts that we have a fine quality of life to stay in north Tayside and he, like me, will be delighted with it.

5.26 pm

Mrs. Rosie Barnes (Greenwich): This is an opportune day to examine the Government's record over eight years. I am not concerned with hidden agendas. The Government's current record is enough of an indictment. We have seen over those eight years the position of the least well off in society getting progressively worse while the better off have thrived. Glib protestations and carefully chosen statistics from the Conservative Government will carry no conviction with those unfortunate people who are on the receiving end of their policies. We see the declining standards in the National Health Service. Three hospitals have closed in my area and none has opened. The number of beds has been dramatically reduced, even though demand for them is rising. Waiting lists are getting longer.

Social services have declined. Old people lack essential care. Although it is true that many pensioners have incomes in addition to their state pension, many have not. A number have only a miserly additional pension and, in many respects, that leaves them the worst off. They are precluded from the many additional entitlements from which they would benefit if they had the state pension. Often those people are the poorest pensioners.

Crime in inner cities and in most of the country is on the increase. Conflict in the classroom continues and children's education is still being used as a political football. The Government—and in London the Inner London education authority — have presided over a calamitous period in state education, with standards falling, teaching morale at an all-time low and children leaving school ill equipped to take advantage of the limited opportunities that are available.

Mr. Bill Walker: On the issue of children in the area of the Inner London education authority who leave school badly equipped, during her speech will the hon. Lady address the fact that ILEA spends more money per child than is spent in any other part of the country? How can it do that but get such awful results, compared with Tayside highland schools?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. I remind the House that there is a limited time for this debate. Hon. Members who have already addressed the House, as well as those who are trying to catch my eye to intervene, make it more difficult for me to call other hon. Members who wish to be called.

Mrs. Barnes: I shall reply briefly to the comment of the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker). It seems that ILEA spends a vast amount per head on administration. However, the evidence of that expenditure is not seen in the schools, nor in their results. Therefore, I endorse the sentiments of the hon. Gentleman's question.

Unemployment in this country remains at more than 3 million, in spite of the endless massaging of the figures. That is what has been achieved during the eight years. The Conservatives now ask for another term to put things right. One may wonder how long they need. The Government have embarked on a policy of sacrificing our long-term economic revival in the interests of a short-lived consumer boom. Those in jobs, especially those in the south-east, are benefiting from increased standards of living. But at what price?

Our share of world trade in manufacture has fallen from 12·4 per cent. in 1979 to 9·6 per cent. in 1986. Our manufacturing trade is in the red. Last year's deficit of £5·8 billion was the worst ever. Manufacturing output is still 4 per cent. below its level when the Tories came to power. We are failing to take advantage of the opportunities that new technologies offer. We are not investing nearly enough in skills, or in research and development.

Let us take a closer look at the ways in which the quality of life has been affected during the past eight years. We should make no mistake that many of the worst areas are those, such as mine in Greenwich, where people are caught between an uncaring Tory Government and an extreme Left-wing Labour council.

Unemployment has been the blight of this Government, but, in spite of the protestations of Conservative Members, something can be done about it. Unemployment is not a fact of life with which we must live, nor something over which the Government have no control. It is realistic to tackle unemployment and the alliance's claim to reduce it by 1 million in three years is a realistic and sustainable programme, based on economic expansion and regional regeneration. Our programme involves a job guarantee for everyone who has been out of work for a year or more and includes specifically the creation of 750,000 jobs over a three-year period through building improvement programmes. When we have housing shortages and when houses are in appalling repair, it is ludicrous to have building workers who are unemployed. That makes no sense.

We are also committed to creating new jobs in the health and caring services. In all, we plan to create 60,000 such jobs. The job release scheme will be expanded. Under it, elderly men, if they so wish, are entitled to take early retirement at the age of 62.

A capital programme for housing, roads and urban renewal makes sense when much of this country's infrastructure is in decline. People are unemployed and week after week, month after month, vast payments are made on the dole. We are paying people to be unemployed, but our country is crumbling and there are jobs to be done. That makes no sense, and the people know that.

What about poverty? We have heard that some Conservative Members do not recognise some of the pictures that are portrayed from these Opposition Benches. I share the views of Opposition Members because I see that poverty in Greenwich and know that it exists. If any Conservative Members wish to come and have a look, I shall be happy to show them that poverty.

In 1979, 11·5 million people were on or near the poverty line. That figure is now more than 16 million. Therefore, one third of the population live in poor families. I see such families struggling to make ends meet, pensioners who cannot afford to turn on the heat, and parents who cannot afford to feed their children adequately. I am shocked by the damp and appalling housing conditions and by the constant colds and bad chests suffered by children. Many of us would expect those conditions to have gone with the Dickens era. However, they have not, and there are plenty of such examples in Greenwich. I expect that many parts of the country are considerably worse.

The alliance is committed to tackling poverty and to improving the lives of those people. That involves giving them more money because they must have a reasonable standard of living. We have a programme to increase benefits for the poor, for old-age pensioners and for families with children. We accept that most of that money must be targeted to the poorest people who need it the most. We are not rich enough to give it to everyone—we wish that we were—so there must be an element of directing it to the most needy cases. Our commitment to higher pensions for old people——

Mr. Marlow: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for giving way. I share—as I am sure we all do—her view on the ideal operation of targeting money to the most needy, but how can we do that without building up the existing problems of the poverty trap?

Mrs. Barnes: I shall say a little more in a moment about the way in which that can be achieved. The alliance is vitally concerned about the poverty trap. There are several circumstances in which it is clearly in people's interests to remain unemployed rather than to take a low-paid job. If they receive a small additional sum from another source — as is the case with pensioners who have a small additional pension — they are precluded from many benefits which would make their lives considerably better. Benefits must be withdrawn on a tapered basis so that nobody will ever be worse off by being employed than by remaining unemployed. That would make nonsense of the incentive to work.

I shall detail briefly the alliance's plan for increased pensions. As a basic, we would offer——

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Lady has made a strong indictment of the Government's policies on jobs and poverty. May we conclude that in the case of a hung Parliament there is no way in which the alliance would support the Conservative party?

Mrs. Barnes: The hon. Gentleman will understand that as a relative newcomer to this Parliament I cannot single handedly give a complete commitment on behalf of the alliance. However, I give a personal commitment, in the event of a hung Parliament, to working towards tackling unemployment and alleviating poverty. I hope that Labour Members will join the alliance in pushing for these measures.

Mr. Fatchett: I can understand that the hon. Lady cannot singlehandedly commit the alliance because that is left to only one other person. However, from what she has said, is it fair to construe that there is no way in which she will work with Conservative Members?

Mrs. Barnes: No, that is not a fair construal. The hon. Gentleman asked me specifically about jobs and poverty and I answered in terms of jobs and poverty. I think that this discussion is outside the sphere of the debate.

I now return to the quality of life. I should like to talk for a few moments in a little more detail about the National Health Service because Conservative Members have commented on it in considerable depth. The Government say that they are spending more; but everyone knows that hospitals are closing and that waiting lists are getting longer. Both facts are true. However, we must accept that the growth in demand is exceeding the increased investment in the Health Service. People are living longer, so we have more elderly people to care for. The average cost of caring for somebody over the age of 75 is eight times the cost of caring for someone between 16 and 75. Therefore, the budget would have to increase by 1 per cent. just to take account of the increasing number of elderly people in our population.

Obviously, the NHS must bear the cost of some of the improvements that it has made. Technological improvements, services and treatments are often expensive. Hip replacements, for example, are costly, but they are available and make a dramatic improvement to the quality of a person's life. Therefore, the denial of them is callous and intolerable. In Greenwich and many other parts—I can speak with some authority as before being elected to this place, I was a researcher and took part in the Central Office of Information survey into the NHS — people make the same point about operations, such as hip replacements; saying, "If I could pay for the operation, I could have it within two weeks, but on the NHS I may have to wait four years." We are talking about elderly people living in misery which can be alleviated by a straightforward operation. While they are waiting, they are often immobile and at the mercy of relatives or social services, so people are having to pick up the bill to enable their lives to continue until they are made mobile and self-sufficient. It does not make sense.

We are living at a time when modern lifestyles — stressful and poverty stricken—place a heavy burden on the NHS. I cannot give any statistics, but certainly if the quality of housing in Greenwich was improved and damp was eliminated, the number of children being admitted to hospital with chronic asthma and bronchitis would fall dramatically. Many women in chronically overcrowded houses, perhaps with an unemployed husband, and under extreme stress are constantly at the doctor's for valium or other sedatives when what they need is a better standard of life. All they need is a decent home. The stress that they suffer as a result of that deprivation sends them and their families straight into the arms of the NHS. It is a never-ending circle.

Mr. Corbyn: Does the hon. Lady agree that private medicine is a drain on the NHS and takes resources away from those who cannot afford to buy their way past the hospital queues? Does she further agree that it would be logical to remove pay beds and privatised services from NHS hospitals and bring back direct labour? Would that be alliance policy?

Mrs. Barnes: Clearly, if private facilities within NHS premises act as a drain on the NHS they should be eliminated. In some cases private patients bring in more money and that cannot be ignored. Some authorities rely considerably on money from private patients. That being said, I would strive for a position where the NHS provides the service that people need at the time when they need it, not four years later than they can get it privately. While I would not oppose private medicine as a right if people want to opt for it, I would prefer that they opted for it for the luxurious optional extras than for basic necessary treatment to alleviate misery.

Mr. Martin Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): Before the hon. Lady leaves the Health Service, an important point must be cleared up. I understand that the alliance has calculated that we must spend 2 per cent. above the rate of inflation to deliver an adequate Health Service. Is she aware that the Government have delivered 3 per cent. above the rate of inflation in the lifetime of this Parliament? Therefore, it sounds as though the alliance, far from caring and providing more resources, would cut health spending.

Mrs. Barnes: Not at all. We have a commitment to increase spending on the NHS over and above what the Government are spending because that is clearly inadequate.

Clearly, we cannot improve on the service without spending more money. The United Kingdom spends fewer of its resources on health than any of its neighbours or any similar country. We in the alliance are committed to a higher level of real expenditure on the NHS. We shall place particular emphasis on preventative care, community care and promoting healthier lifestyles.

Much of what the NHS is doing is not its prime responsibility. It is picking up the pieces caused by poverty and other problems.

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Lady has been extremely kind and patient with the House. She has catalogued many expenditure programmes to which she says the alliance is committed and she said that she was a researcher. This is not a trick question, but has the alliance specifically calculated what the increase in direct taxation or corporation tax would have to be to fund those programmes?

Mrs. Barnes: The alliance has a thoroughly costed menu which has been audited and will be published tomorrow. It has been produced according to the Treasury model and will be available for hon. Members to scrutinise.

We in the alliance are talking about a 2 per cent. real increase over and above what is being spent. We are committed to a pay increase for NHS staff whose wages or salaries have fallen further behind since 1979. We are aware of the Government's recent moves over nurses' pay and we, like many others in society and the nurses themselves, regard that with cynicism. We are talking about 60,000 new health and social services jobs.

The NHS is in a crisis and will decline to the point of collapse unless something is done. The Government with the commitment that they claim to have cannot stand with their hand on their heart and say to the people of Greenwich, "The NHS is safe with us." They will laugh in Greenwich.

The state of housing is a national disgrace, despite the claim in the 1983 Tory manifesto that

> "Our goal is to make Britain the best housed nation in Europe."

The collapse of public spending on house building since the Conservatives came to power has resulted in record numbers of homeless people and of others trapped in overpriced, inadequate, privately rented accommodation, while a further sector are trapped in council homes which are either too small for them or desperately need repair and improvement. In many parts, including Greenwich, only those who can afford to buy have any choice of housing and, in the south-east, few can afford to buy as house prices soar.

In the main, Labour councils ignore the desire of ordinary people for choice and control over their homes. Labour councils share with the alliance the commitment to more investment in housing, but they are insistent that it should go to local authorities for more council homes. They pay lip service to tenant power but in reality they are afraid of it as something that they cannot control. At present in Greenwich the Labour council is trying to replace tenant associations with tenant associations of their own placemen which are headed by council appointees on a salary. Clearly this is not a genuine reflection of the tenants' voice, particularly when tenants want to challenge the authority that is providing their homes and which is, in effect, their landlords and which is making a poor job of it.

Our commitment is to provide everyone with a decent home and a choice. We support home ownership and the right to buy. We support people's right to rent and we are committed to a greatly expanded rented sector by creating a new partnership housing sector which would involve working with banks and building societies and combining public and private money, as has been done successfully in other countries, to provide a large number of homes to rent that are managed by housing associations. We should not go back to days of Rachmanism and private landlords.

We are committed to investing in local authority housing to get council houses in a decent state of repair. At the same time we would give tenants the right to manage their own estates to give them control over their homes. Their current feeling of complete helplessness in their damp, overcrowded conditions leads to despair and anger and they recognise that neither of the two old parties has been able to tackle their housing problems.

What about crime? The Conservative manifesto of 1983 said:

> "already street crime is being reduced and public confidence improved in some of the worst inner-city areas."

What has happened? Crime of all kinds is increasing. House breaking and car thefts are becoming commonplace. Vandalism is running riot. But perhaps the most worrying aspect of all is the dramatic rise in crimes of violence, which often include the use of weapons. Until we tackle unemployment and social deprivation and get more policemen back on the beat, the Tories' claim is just pie in the sky.

The quality of life in this country is declining, especially for the old, the poor, the children and the sick. Those people are at risk. The Government have had eight years to tackle the plight of those people, but have failed. Will the country give them another go? I doubt it.

5.52 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I agree with the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) who proposed this motion; it is a huge tragedy, a cost to the nation and a calamity to many individuals that we have so many people out of work. It is worrying that there are so many thousands of houses that are substandard and that we are unable to provide comfortable homes for people to live in. It is distressing that there are so many people waiting for relief as they care for others or as they seek medical treatment for themselves. It is little short of scandalous that so many of our children leave school after 11 years of compulsory education with nothing that society reckons as valuable. It is appalling that Britain lags so far behind our major competitors in the quality and quantity of industrial training.

I gathered from his speech that the hon. Member for Leyton shares my concern for these issues and for the many people whose lives are nowhere near as good as we would wish them to be. There is no division in this House about the importance of these matters. Where the division lies is in what is best to be done about them.

The solution of the hon. Member for Leyton and his hon. Friends is quite simply to raise taxes and spend the money not on jobs in industry, but on jobs in central and local government; raise rates and hope that neither business nor the people with initiative and drive will leave for more providently run authorities.

When the money runs out, as it always will, a Labour Government can always borrow. It does not matter if, as a result, inflation rises. It does not matter if, as a result of that, the savings of pensioners become valueless and the value of their pension constantly lags behind the price of what they need to buy. Why does it not matter? It does not matter because in the end there will always be the chance to borrow from the International Monetary Fund. Why should a Labour Government care that when they go to the IMF to bail them out they are diminishing the total pool of resources available to the poorest countries in the world — to bail out a country which is incapable of being one of the most developed in the world?

Conservative Members have a different view as to the road that we should follow. What do we believe in? We believe in making it possible for British companies to take on the foreign competition and win. It is always tempting to take money from the temporarily successful and give it to the failures. The longer that we do that the longer it takes the failures to look at their standards and improve them. While Jaguar received subsidy its cars broke down. Now that it does not, its cars beat the world, and because of that Jaguar takes on more people and the unemployment figures start to fall. The best news for the unemployed is not that Government subsidy is to be increased; it is that last month over 50 per cent. of the cars that were sold in this country were made in Britain. That is the Tory approach to unemployment.

Why are there so many substandard houses? The reason is that they do not belong to the people who live in them. That is why we have pushed forward with the sale of council houses. When people own their own house they set their own standards. When things go wrong in their house they mend them. They no longer have to wait, sometimes for months, before even a window pane is fixed. That is what we have done in Rochester-upon-Medway, which is one of my local district councils. We have sold more houses per head then almost any other local authority in the country, so it is of little surprise that we doubled our majority in last Thursday's elections.

Of course we need and want more health care, but it is because we have spent so much on health that we can now achieve miracles of curative medicine that hitherto were undreamed of. The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) was quite right when she said that, in effect, our problem in the National Health Service is that of managing success, when more people live longer and when people who would have died of their disability live, not only into middle age, but into old age. Of course that puts a huge demand on resources, but that is one of the reasons why the Government have introduced, for the first time, an income for carers.

What about education? It is typical that in education the Opposition should still concentrate on destruction rather than creation. They propose the abolition of private schools. Why? Because they work. Never mind that they suck money into the education system. Never mind that they reduce the size of state sector classes. They do not breed people who expect to be clients for the rest of their lives. That is why they have to go.

The Opposition propose the abolition of grammar schools. Why? Because they are hugely popular with parents, employers and children. They do not breed people who expect to be clients for the rest of their lives. That is why they have to go.

The Opposition would do better to give priority to dealing with schools that do not work, not those that do. The most expensive education authority in Britain, as we have already heard, is Labour-controlled. For all that money, does it provide a standard of education that is higher than anywhere else? As the hon. Member for Greenwich said, it does not. It runs schools from which every year thousands of children escape with nothing that employers, parents or children value. But we take a different view. We look first for an education that parents want. That is why we have given parents more choice of schools, more control over their local schools and more information about how their children are doing at school. We also want better teaching. That is why we have sought assessment of teachers so that they can do their vital job more effectively. That is also why we are planning better training for head teachers.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Is it not hypocritical for Tory Members to lay down prescriptions for state schools when more than 90 per cent. of them opt out and send their children to public schools?

Mr. Rowe: It is no more hypocritical than Labour Members creating council housing policy when many of them live in private housing. That is an absurd intervention and I dismiss it. [HON. MEMBERS: "What about the Health Service?"] I use the Health Service a great deal.

Mr. Rogers: The hon. Member goes private when he wants to.

Mr. Rowe: It is open to the hon. Gentleman to use the private health service any time he wishes.

We are taking more responsibility for head teachers, although the teaching unions do not want it. There can be nothing more derisory than the fact that the teaching unions are voting against the allocation to professional people of the kind of responsibility that in any other profession the professionals are glad to accept. That is a wonderful commentary on the poor state to which the National Union of Teachers has sunk. We believe in improving education, not in spending more money on education bureaucrats.

The Opposition worry about training but they want to suck money out of companies regardless of the companies' state of health and process the money through yet another centralised bureaucracy to lay on training programmes devised by central Government. Some Government expenditure is, of course, necessary and it is interesting to

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note that the Conservative Government in the United Kingdom spend as much on training as any of our competitors. It is United Kingdom companies which do not do so. We could argue for ever about why United Kingdom firms take less interest in training than, for example, German firms, but the fact is that United Kingdom firms regard training more as a cost than as an investment. If that is so, they must be making a profit before they will expand their training. That is why I welcome the growing profitability of British firms. As with all our other policies, we can expect far more progress from profitable companies than from companies debilitated by a swollen, theory-ridden central Government.

I share the concern of the hon. Member for Leyton. He was right to bring these matters to the attention of the House. The next four weeks will determine whether we go on attacking these problems from a position of growing strength and success or whether we return to a Government wonderfully strong on rhetoric but pathetic on delivery. Of course we have not finished, but we have made a fine beginning. When the next Government come in, I and many of my hon. Friends will be looking for more and better community care, more and better houses and more and better jobs, and we shall be looking with confidence that they will be forthcoming.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. I remind the House that the Front Bench spokesmen hope to catch my eye from 6.30 pm.

6.3 pm

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): It is appropriate that we should today be debating a subject on which the country will make its choice in exactly one month's time. Having drawn third place in the ballot, I have no hesitation whatever in committing an act of plagiarism and endorsing the motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen). I have tried to think what the quality of life means for my constituents and how to measure that which is worth living against the drudgery of a life that has not much quality about it.

I believe that the quality of life includes a number of elements, although this is by no means an exclusive list. Above all, it must mean living in freedom from the curse of poverty, freedom from having to choose how to live on little more than £30 per week—a sum that many people regard as appropriate for a meal for two in a medium-class restaurant. Quality of life means not having to choose whether to spend money on food, on heating, on a pram for the baby or perhaps on new clothes or shoe repairs. At least a quarter of my constituents have to make that kind of awkward choice every week. A skill is required to manage on social security which many of us do not possess. It is particularly galling for people to have to go cap in hand to the DHSS to ask for single payments to replace a bed, to obtain surgical boots or to cope with the arrival of a new baby. Many people in my constituency do not have freedom from that kind of poverty. Quality of life means not just freedom from poverty but a little luxury—being able to go on a holiday, being able to afford to travel and occasionally to buy some new clothes and live it up a little. I look forward to a time when that quality of life and freedom from poverty will be available to more people.

Quality of life means living in dignified housing to which one is proud to bring one's friends rather than in a home that is draughty, in poor repair or riddled with condensation. In my constituency, as a result of a two thirds drop in the amount of money available for housing investment, that freedom is denied to people in both the public and the private sector. The problems of damp and disrepair and of homes that cannot be properly heated are experienced as much by poor owner-occupiers as by council tenants.

Quality of life means decent medical care and good health. We have suffered a number of closures, not just of hospitals but of operating theatres. For example, the recent closure of the orthopaedic operating theatre at Dulwich hospital has put an end to hip replacement operations there.

Quality of life means freedom for our children to look forward to a good education and training appropriate to a job that is reasonably highly paid and involves the exercise of skill. Quality of life also means security—freedom from burglary, theft of one's vehicle or attack on the street. It means living in surroundings in which the town environment has style and dignity and the countryside has beauty. Travelling around the country recently, I have noticed the tattiness of the sides of our roads, the litter on the streets and the dereliction alongside railway embankments. It is a disgrace, and Richard Branson and his gimmicks have done nothing to improve it.

The hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) said that the Opposition were exaggerating and that we were living on another planet. My borough of Lambeth has gone to the trouble of commissioning an entirely independent organisation—the firm of Nathaniel Lichfield—working in conjunction with the Centre for Environmental Studies, to chart what has happened to the quality of life in the borough since the Tory Government came to power. These figures have been provided not by a partial borough council but by an independent auditing organisation. Between 1979 and 1984 the average standard of living of the 96,000 households in Lambeth as measured by gross income fell by 5 per cent. after allowing for inflation. In the same period—we have not been able to measure up to the present time—average incomes in the country as a whole rose by 4 per cent. before tax and just over 1 per cent. after tax. In other words, my borough has suffered a sharp decline in incomes compared with the rest of the country. That increase in inequality has been largely due to the dramatic increase in unemployment. In 1984, 45 per cent. of households in my constituency had incomes below £4,400 without London allowance. In other words, nearly half the population was living at or below the poverty line. Between 1979 and 1984 the lower income households experienced a 10 per cent. decline in income before tax and the poorest 10 per cent. of the population suffered a decline in income of 15 per cent. over that period.

The largest drop in income has been among independent households, including those of single-parent families, and many of those hardest hit have been black members of the community. The total balance sheet for households in Lambeth shows that it would have required an extra £1,350 per household in the period 1979-84 to compensate them for the loss of income. The total loss of income to the local economy during that period has been £125 million.

I have only been able to give figures up to 1984. If the present economic and fiscal trends continue until 1991 the audit forecasts that there will be a further loss of income of £1,900 per household relative to the income of the average household in Britain. That represents a further reduction of £180 million in the combined income of all households in my borough. That is the audit's independent assessment of the years of Tory Government. It also independently charts the decrease in the housing investment programme of 64 per cent. in my borough over the same period, the reduction, in real terms, of 45 per cent. in rate support grant, and the cut in inner city partnership moneys this year. Such is the independently charted history of the Tories in Government in my borough, and worse to come is forecast.

What have the eight years of Conservative Government meant for the quality of life in my borough and constituency? They have meant depression, dereliction and division. They have meant the few rich getting richer and the poor stunningly poorer, with almost half of them living at or near the poverty line. Most of the population bear more taxes despite their poverty—a greater burden of VAT, of rates and of other charges upon their income. They have meant a 400 per cent. increase in unemployment, which has particularly hit the young, the school leaver, the college leaver, minorities and women. Half of the population has been excluded from affordable housing of a dignified standard. Crime has been escalating, as the underlying causes of crime grow worse. Those years have meant that hospital operating theatres and other hospitals have been closed. They have meant the Health Service walking on a tightrope without a safety net; and the impoverishment of most people and services financially, and, socially, of the whole community—because no one is immune from the consequences of economic blight wrought by the Tories.

We have been racked by riot as well as poverty, and there are no signs of hope until the Government are turned out of office. We have had no tax handouts for the community, no spoils of privatisation and no bonuses from North sea oil. All we have are forecasts of more and worse, together with the poll tax, which will bring a blight on our community.

Our future lies only with a Labour Government who care for the entire community and who put people before the Tory beggaring of the community. The quality of life in my borough depends on ending the Tory policies that have cast a shadow over the constituency that I represent. I know that the people of my borough cannot wait for an improvement in quality, and cannot turn this Government out soon enough.

6.14 pm

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) who has talked about the problems in his borough. If he looked over his shoulder at the neighbouring borough of Wandsworth, he would find that people there do not have anything like the problems of the people in his borough. He might scratch his head and ask himself the reason. On one side of the boundary there is a Left-wing Labour authority and on the other, a prudent, sensible, caring Conservative authority. That might have something to do with it.

Excuse me for getting carried away, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we live in exciting times. We also live in sad times. About 80 of our colleagues will, of their own free will, not be rejoining us in a few weeks' time. These are sad times, too, because the Labour party, which for so many years has given signal service to our society, is now poised on the precipice of terminal decline. That is a turning point in our history.

The utility and relevance of the Labour party are exhausted. It is in a dreadful state; it is leaderless; we do not hear any more of the dream ticket about which we heard some time ago. The party is riven by factions. Where it is prominently in power in the country, it is controlled by the loony Left. Such Labour Members of Parliament as are returned after the election will, in the majority, be of the loony Left, and the party is now fatally undermined by that final, racist obscenity and absurdity—the crisis over black sections.

The Labour party—I know that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are a member of it—is facing the big drop; and, faced with it, all it can come up with is the big lie. The myth-making factory has been working overtime.

Mr. Soames: Goebbels' propaganda.

Mr. Marlow: The Goebbels propaganda about the health service——

Mr. Corbyn *rose*——

Mr. Marlow: I have very little time.

Of course, there are problems in the Health Service and we shall do more about them. However, the Government have increased expenditure on the Health Service, in real terms, by more than a quarter, whereas, whatever the Opposition wanted to do during the last Labour Government, the reality was that the International Monetary Fund put a block on their plans. They had to cut off their programme and reduce expenditure on the Health Service. We have improved and increased expenditure, but the Opposition were not able to do so. We have heard about waiting lists. In my constituency, and in those of most hon. Members, waiting lists have come down during the past few years. Let us have the truth about that.

There have been great problems and scandals about housing. I, and many hon. Friends who have been campaigning during the local elections, have been knocking on doors in areas that were run down and decrepit eight years ago. We have seen how the houses there have been improved, and how the environment, furnishings and fabric have been improved. We have seen how much better off our housing stock and the people who live in it now are. There has been a great improvement in my constituency, and I am sure that that is true of many other parts of the country.

Mr. Corbyn: There are people sleeping on the streets.

Mr. Marlow: There are problems in housing—again, largely in Labour local authority areas in which there are massive, maladministered estates and in which the local authorities have not even collected the rents. In some parts of London one fifth of the rent remains uncollected. No wonder that those authorities do not have the cash to improve the properties, to deal with the plumbing, to deal

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with the damp and the problems in which people are living. Is it not absurd that in precisely those authorities' areas homelessness exists side by side with empty houses? Is it not absurd that many of our citizens are trapped in homelessness while many others have houses that they want to make available for rent, but, because of past fears about the possible policies of a re-elected Labour Government, they have not put those houses back on the market? People are willing to help, but they are blighted by Socialism.

There is also the great myth about the cut in manufacturing industry. It has been booming — productivity and manufactured output have been growing during the past few years. Let us put the issue in perspective. If manufacturing output is not as high as Opposition Members want it to be, we have been getting oil from the North sea as well. How does one do that? One uses the same skills and machinery. Why is manufacturing industry on one side and oil on the other? Add the two together and there has been a massive increase in national output.

British Airways has been one of our most successful industries. It comprises people who build the airports and maintain the aircraft, people who fly and manage the aircraft and people who manufacture them. Why are the Opposition obsessed only with the people involved in manufacturing industry? There is a whole realm of activity that creates wealth in the country.

Mr. Soames *rose*——

Mr. Marlow: I should love to give way, but I must get on.

The Opposition tell us about their miraculous cure for job creation. It is what I call a Bulgarian solution. If one goes to the national state museum in Sofia one finds a great number of exhibits and artefacts.

Mr. Corbyn: Has the hon. Gentleman been there?

Mr. Malow: I have indeed.

Mr. Corbyn: Was he indoctrinated there?

Mr. Marlow: Of course. In front of every artefact and exhibit there will be someone standing as an attendant. Of course, there is no unemployment in Bulgaria. There would not be any unemployment in this country in those circumstances, but what poverty! What a way of life! What a way to run a country!

As my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) said, the reality is that the average pensioner has seen an improvement in his standard of living that has been even greater during the lifetime of this Government than that which has been enjoyed by the person in employment. I understand that the Opposition are planning to give vast amounts of money to pensioners. We have had this before. When this happened when the last Labour Government were in office, the International Monetary Fund came in and the payment of the Christmas bonus had to be stopped. It is no good talking about plans that cannot be delivered. That is deception. That is not the way to carry on.

Then we have this myth about the north-south divide. That is nonsense. Does the House realise that unemployment in Halifax is less than it is in Hastings? Unemployment in Berwick-upon-Tweed is less than that in Brighton. Unemployment in Northampton is less than it is in Southampton. There is a divide, and it is the one that I have alluded to. There is a divide between those areas of the country that are dominated by Socialism in local government and those that are prudently run by the Conservative party.

Mr. Corbyn: What about unemployment in Wandsworth?

Mr. Marlow: If we look at the unemployment statistics that the hon. Gentleman is asking about, five out of the 12 constituencies in the country with the highest levels of unemployment are in greater London. Greater London is awash with work. Employers are crying out for people to do jobs, and people will not take on those jobs. The problem in London is not a problem of unemployment. It is a problem of unemployment culture, and it is brought about by the Socialist authorities who produce those dreadful housing estates which they maladminister. They produce this dreadful education which inculcates attitudes of despair, irresponsibility and dependence. The jobs are there and the people are not taking them. They have been prepared by Socialism not to take those jobs.

There is a problem in this country. It is a problem to which we shall address ourselves during the general election campaign. It is the problem of Socialism.

6.22 pm

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on initiating this important debate and on the cogent, honest and constructive way in which he moved the motion.

The quality of life is important to Opposition Members as it is to the majority of the people, and it has fallen drastically since the Government were elected eight years ago. There are 6 million people who live in families which have been out of work for 12 months. These people are not statistics; we are talking about potential wage earners who have families, and their quality of life has fallen. Millions of pensioners have suffered since this Government changed the Labour Government's social security legislation, which stated that pensions should increase in line with the rise in earnings or the rise in prices, whichever was the higher. The Government have stolen £11 billion from pensioners by changing social security legislation.

The Government have created or encouraged low pay and 6 million are receiving low wages. Their pay is lower than the decency threshold that was laid down by the Council of Europe. If low pay creates employment, there should be no unemployment in the northern region, which has some of the lowest pay in the United Kingdom. With the introduction of their Wages Act 1986, the Government have helped the spread of low pay by abolishing the Truck Acts and curtailing the activities of wages councils.

The Government argue that those who are highly paid will work harder only if they are given incentives and that those who are in receipt of low pay should be penalised to make them work harder. That is why the new managers in the National Health Service have been given a £60 a week bonus on their £30,000 salaries to make them more efficient. At the same time ancillary workers who are earning about £60 a week have been penalised by the introduction of privatisation. The Government believe that that will make them work harder. Under this Government one person's incentive is another person's poverty trap.

On south Tyneside, the area which I represent, there are 7,000 on the housing waiting list. If there are 7,000 applications, there are 7,000 families in need. This year the south Tyneside local authority will be building 26 houses. That is the result of the Government's decision to cut the housing investment programme allocation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you were a Department of the Environment Minister when I was chairman of the South Tyneside housing committee, when 700 houses were built in a year. In 1978-79, there was an HIP allocation of £14·9 million to cope with price increases and the rate of inflation. To maintain that level of spending would require an HIP allocation of £27·9 million this year, and south Tyneside received only £4·8 million. As I have said, there are 7,000 applicants on the housing list.

I recall a time when it was possible to walk across the Tyne from ship to ship. Ships were being repaired and others that had only recently been launched were being fitted out. The only ship now in our region is hardship. There is hardship for the thousands who are out of work, for the thousands of pensioners who have had their pensions reduced by the Government, for young people who are leaving school with no prospect of employment, for the thousands who are waiting for houses, when local authorities are not being given the money that is necessary to enable them to build houses, and those who are in the long queue waiting to go into hospital for operations. Hardship is the only ship in the northern region or on the Tyne nowadays.

My hon. Friends have referred to what the next Labour Government will do. We are determined to ensure that every family will have a decent home. We shall improve the quality of housing and the number of houses built. We shall ensure that new houses are built by providing councils with the necessary moneys to build, to repair and to carry out maintenance and improvement works.

The next Labour Government will deal with the massive increase in crime by providing crime prevention grants to all tenants and home owners. We shall extend the victim support scheme and reverse the cuts that the Government have imposed on the criminal injuries compensation scheme.

We shall work towards achieving universal provision of nursery education for all three and four-year-olds. We shall reduce class sizes and provide greatly improved equipment for schools. We shall create a two-year foundation course in education and training for all 16 to 19-year-olds. We shall open up higher and further education to a far wider cross-section of the population.

We shall assist pensioners by raising the weekly single pension by £5 and the married pension by £8. We shall introduce a winter premium of £5 a week to help with the cost of fuel bills for pensioners who are on supplementary benefits. The full state earnings-related scheme will be retained. We shall invest in improved health care, meals on wheels, home helps and social services.

Government Members will want to know where the money will come from. They say that there is no money available to do these things but the reality is that there is plenty of it. It is costing £20 billion to keep 3 million on the streets. It costs £1 billion a year to maintain the EEC food mountains. It costs £600 million to flog off cheap butter to the Russians. The cost of Trident is £10 billion, and that money is being spent in the event of those well-fed Russians attacking us. That is the sort of thing that we have had from this Government. Those who live in the area that I represent have been losing out while others have been prospering.

Since the Government were elected, top directors and executives receiving £70,000 a year or more have been given tax handouts of £19,100 a year—some £370 a week. At the same time the people that my hon. Friends and I represent have been suffering. There is plenty of money around but the trouble is that the Government have given it to their friends. We shall ensure that the next Labour Government look after our people.

6.29 pm

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): It seems that whenever I contribute to a debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am limited to about three minutes. I found myself in that position last Friday.

I listened carefully to the hon. Members for Crawley (Mr. Soames) and for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). I have listened to them before, especially the hon. Member for Northampton, North, who confines himself to attacking the Labour party. He never advances any Conservative policies. He talks about being a member of a caring Conservative party. It is not caring and he is certainly not caring, especially in the light of what he had to say this afternoon.

My hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) made a first-class contribution to the debate. His various arguments went home one by one as he spoke on behalf of his constituency and the nation generally.

The hon. Member for Crawley reckoned that my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) dropped in from cloud-cuckoo-land underneath a parachute. At least he dropped in, and at least he understands the realities. The hon. Member for Crawley merely stood up in cloud-cuckoo-land, and that was reflected in his speech. The hon. Member for Crawley is not aware simply because he lives in the stockbroker belt—he comes from that belt. He does not understand poverty.

Mr. Soames: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Haynes: I will not give way in the short time that is available to me. The hon. Gentleman has not had to want for anything——

Mr. Soames: I live in Lambeth.

Mr. Haynes: We who live out in the sticks know what poverty is about. I know—I was born into it. I see it in my constituency and it bothers me that the Conservative Government are not prepared to move in the right direction. I hope to God that when the electorate get the opportunity on 11 June they will kick the Tories out. Let us have a Government who will do something for those people who need help. For the past eight years the Government have helped their friends — they have poured money into the pockets of the rich and pinched it from those who need it.

In my constituency there are elderly people living in three-bedroomed houses—widows and single pensioners—when they should be in a flat or a bungalow. The end result is that young married people cannot get accommodation. However, the money is there. My local authority has not built any bungalows or flats for elderly people since that lot on the Conservative Benches came

[Mr. Haynes]

into office. When we get into power we aim to change all that in the interests of those people who need accommodation.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Mr. Michie) that the elderly people of this country have made their contribution. Those people fought in the last war of 1939-45, some fought in the war of 1914-18. They offered their lives to the nation, but look how the Tories are treating them. We shall put that right at the first opportunity.

In my constituency the pits have been closed down, but nothing has followed. Young lads go on to the dole queue because they cannot get work. The Conservatives talk about caring, but my health authority has a mile-long queue of people who want hearing aids. People are living longer and longer and we are getting a larger elderly population, but, at the same time, there are cuts in health services. The end result is that the elderly are suffering because they cannot get the things that they need—one of them is hearing aids. This will continue while that lot on the Conservative Benches are in power.

I asked the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) whether he would tell the electorate about wheeling in Ministers on a Friday to vote down a Bill for the extension of services for the disabled. Not long ago that happened again when all the Ministers were wheeled in to vote down the Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) to provide free television licences for pensioners who have given their lives for this nation. That Bill was voted down. The elderly people will remember that. Indeed, they told me about it in my constituency. It has sunk in.

I could go on and on, but time does not allow. It would be unfair to the Front Bench spokesmen, who intend to reply, if I were to continue. However, I believe that some hon. Members are greedy. They take more and more time to put forward their proposals and the end result is that people like me who sit on the Back Benches do not get the opportunity to make a contribution. Our contributions are important for those whom we represent.

6.32 pm

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): We have had a lively and interesting debate. I suspect that that is appropriate, given what the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) called the exciting times in which we live.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) not just on his success in the ballot, but also on his foresight in proposing such a motion on the day when the Prime Minister announced the date of the general election. It was almost as if my hon. Friend had had private talks at Downing street and knew which motion to put before the House. I also congratulate him on the way in which he introduced the motion. He enabled the House subsequently to enjoy a wide-ranging discussion.

We have heard from a number of my hon. Friends and each of them demonstrated a deep concern and a deep knowledge of their constituencies. It is not surprising that they have been elected as Labour Members of Parliament, and it will be no great surprise to see them all back in this House after the election on 11 June.

The hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) entertained us all in his normal style. I found his speech a passable impression of a parody of a Member of Parliament. It would have been useful if, during his speech, he had referred to some of the harsh economic facts that I put in front of him. Unfortunately, the central office script and the clichés it contained did not allow him to extend his brief that far.

The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes), who is no longer present in the Chamber, made a balanced speech in what was her valedictory contribution to the House. The hon. Lady sat demurely upon the fence, and never answered the question that will be crucial in the next month. On which side will she jump? On which side will the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), the leader of the SDP, jump? On which side will the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) jump? The hon. Lady said she had an easy answer to that question: she was too inexperienced and too recent a Member of the House to offer any suggestions. I believe that the electors of Greenwich and the electors in every other constituency have the right to know the answer to that question. Will the alliance jump for the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition? Will that be the choice? If so, how will they make that choice? It is a clear choice and we need a clear answer.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leyton discussed how the quality of life in Britain has deteriorated. My hon. Friend will recall the definition of poverty used by the Church in the "Faith in the City" report. They characterised poverty in three ways — lack of money, lack of dignity and loss of rights. I believe that, judged by those three criteria, the Government have increased poverty, impoverished our people and, as a result, impoverished this country.

A number of my hon. Friends have pointed out that there are now more than double the number of people living on supplementary benefit than was the case when the Government came to office in 1979. Each of them faces the difficulty of managing his or her affairs. Very often they face the humiliation of making an application to the local Department of Health and Social Security office. They are not treated in the same way as the Government have treated the City swindlers on the question of VAT. Some of my hon. Friends noted a report last week that stated that the City had been able to slip £1 billion through the VAT loophole. There is one rich law for those in the City and one poor law for those claiming supplementary benefit. Those of my constituents and my hon. Friend's constituents who are making claims for single benefits find that they are missing out on the essentials of life because of the Social Security Act 1986. Not for them the treatment given to the Government's rich friends in the City of London.

The biggest single factor in the increase in poverty is the increase in unemployment and the increase in long-term unemployment. We are about to have a June election. I suspect that one of the reasons for that is that we are all aware that the long-term prospect for unemployment—on non-massaged figures—is that it will continue to rise. The House does not need to take my word for it. It can take the word of the Oxford Economic Forecast for the United Kingdom, an independent organisation that published figures last week showing an anticipated increase in unemployment during 1987, 1988 and subsequent years.

The Government say, "We have tried". The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) said that it was a great problem and the hon. Member for Crawley said he was deeply concerned. The Conservatives claim they have tried for eight years, but during that time unemployment has trebled. One of two conclusions can be drawn from that statement. Either the Government are shedding crocodile tears and have no concern or sympathy for the unemployed or they are simply incompetent and do not know how to handle Britain's economic affairs. Perhaps it is a mixture of both. They are insensitive, they are unsympathetic, but, above all else, they are incompetent.

In 1980, the Prime Minister said:

> "We are reaching the trough of the recession and it will start to turn down towards the end of next year."

At that stage, the unemployment figure was 1·6 million. The figures have subsequently been massaged, but the level of unemployment has doubled. If the economic recession was turning down in 1980 and the Prime Minister was right, what has happened subsequently is an unrivalled record of incompetence in the history of democratic government. The Government have offered no hope and no future for many of our people. They have placed a whole generation in some areas of the country into a situation in which they have little to look forward to, little in terms of skills and little in terms of prospects. That is the damage that the Government have caused. That is why the quality of life has been reduced for many people.

My hon. Friend also talked about the loss of dignity that has occurred for many of our citizens—a loss of dignity that impoverishes the quality of life. We as Members of Parliament see that loss of dignity day in, day out in our constituencies. More than 1 million people are on housing waiting lists. The elderly are living in totally unsuitable accommodation. Young families in my constituency are living in high rise blocks with no possibility of moving or transferring into suitable accommodation because the Government have cut housing investment programme allocations to Leeds by more than 66 per cent. That is the Government's record and that is the loss of dignity that is involved.

The Government talk about the elderly. They talk about the problems in the National Health Service. They talk about youth training schemes that lead nowhere and further reduce dignity. Such talk comes from a party that espouses the rhetoric of opportunity. The Government tell us time and again that they are the party of opportunity. Where is the opportunity for the elderly people in my constituency who, this winter, will decide whether they can afford to put on their heating? Where is the opportunity for the young unemployed people who have had no work and no prospect of work? Where is the opportunity in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon)? He talked about what has happened to basic industries in his constituency. The only opportunity that the Government have fostered and encouraged is the opportunity for a small number to do well on the backs of the vast majority of people. On that criterion, the Government have also impoverished and weakened our society.

Let me consider the third matter, the loss of rights. The Government have indulged in an unprecedented attack on civil liberties and on democracy. Let us consider the list since 1983. There has been the loss of the basic right to belong to a trade union at GCHQ.

Mr. Bill Walker: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Fatchett: I shall not give way. We are short of time.

For 18 million people in the metropolitan counties and the Greater London area there has been the loss of a fundamental right to vote. Who would have believed that a democratic Government would come to the House without embarrassment and take away that major and important right? They have taken from nearly 400,000 teachers the fundamental democratic right to negotiate with their employers. In the Wright and Westland affairs they have shown themselves to be obsessed with secrecy, making sure that each and every decision is taken behind closed doors and is not subject to democratic accountability.

We have been told that if the Prime Minister is fortunate enough to win a third term of office the Cabinet is to be dried out. All the remaining wets in the Government are to disappear. In this morning's issue of *The Independent*, Anthony Bevins states:

> "no one crosses Margaret Thatcher and gets away with it."

It is no wonder there has been an attack on democratic rights. In this Prime Minister, we have somebody who believes in a centralised authoritarian approach to government. That is the record so far—an increase in real poverty, a loss of dignity and a loss of democratic rights for our people. What will happen if the Government have a third term?

My hon. Friend mentioned many of the hidden items in the Tory agenda. For instance, there is no denial of the increase in VAT. We know that the Prime Minister quite happily talks about a poll tax. From figures, we know that in a city such as Leeds, for instance, poll tax will discriminate and divide. It will enable the rich to pay less and the less-than-well-off to pay more. The figures in Leeds are simple. Some 27 per cent. of electors, concentrated mostly in Tory areas, will pay less, and 73 per cent. of the electorate will pay substantially more because of the poll tax. As the hon. Member for Northampton, North said, these are exciting times.

During the next month, the Labour party will make sure that it is able to bring the arguments to the British electorate. We shall say to the electorate that the Government have divided and impoverished our society in a way that nobody would have contemplated eight years ago. It has created a crime-ridden, bitter and cynical Britain in which the values of care and mutual help are denigrated and in which a "get-quick" approach, regardless of the consequences, is exalted.

Over the next month, we shall offer the vision and hope of a different Britain, in which the young accept their responsibilities for the elderly, the employed for the unemployed, the healthy for the sick, and the strong for the weak. Our appeal will be unashamedly for the moral ground. Only by developing a sense of moral purpose for our country can we marry efficiency with social justice, lessen division and conflict and improve the quality of life for our citizens. It is only because Labour offers such a vision of the future that we can look forward to a Labour victory and make 11 June liberation and freedom day for our people.

6.46 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): As the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) said, it has been an interesting and wide-ranging debate. He listened, as I certainly have, to the speeches that have been delivered

[Mr. David Trippier]

this afternoon. If he were honest, he would have to admit that the contributions from the Opposition side have been woefully inadequate, whereas, despite the fact that I shall be biased, I must pay a warm tribute to my colleagues, whose contributions have been of a high standard. The debate has had such an impact on me that when next I am given an opportunity to vote on the televising of Parliament I shall vote for it. If the nation had heard the contributions to the debate and what was said by my hon. Friends, even the Opposition would give us a bye in the general election. That is a fact, not hypothesis.

The quality of life means different things to different people. The motion moved by the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) focused on a few elements. They were jobs, the National Health Service, investment in housing, schools, and pensions. We have heard from other hon. Members what they consider to be important in determining the quality of life of our citizens. Of course, all such matters are important. Everyone is concerned, and rightly so, about health, housing, education and perhaps, above all, about their ability to contribute to society and to earn their livelihood in employment.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) said, there is no debate about such basic truths. That is not the debate. The real debate is about two matters. It is about what role Government — any Government — can and should play in determining the quality of life of its citizens. It is about the Government's record in the areas in which they have a role. It is a record of which I am proud to speak today. In his excellent speech, my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) made it clear that, like every other nation, our economic prosperity and, therefore, our quality of life depend on the goods and services that we produce.

There is no short cut to prosperity. Prosperity is based on the skills, talents, enterprise and sheer effort of millions of individuals. It follows the creation of wealth. Wealth creation means selling goods and services in the open market, both at home and abroad, against fierce competition, as my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent suggested. To sell abroad means not just getting price and quality right, although that is vitally important, but convincing customers overseas that we can deliver on time and to specification.

Under the last Labour Government, we lost that reputation. United Kingdom industry became a by-word for strikes and bad industrial relations. What price the quality of life then, I ask the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Mr. Michie)? That period has now passed, but it could so easily return in the disastrous event of a Labour Government being elected. As my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) stated, the true role of Government is to create the conditions which allow wealth creation to flourish. This we have done. We have halted the runaway growth of public spending, while spending more on key priorities such as health, law and order, and education. We have cut Labour's penal rates of personal taxation and we have abolished others, such as the national insurance surcharge, which was not even mentioned by Labour Members. We have abolished Labour's tax on jobs. We have cut Government borrowing and have taken giant strides towards driving inflation out of the economy. We have significantly encouraged enterprise and the growth of small businesses, about which, again, we did not hear a single word from Labour Members. There is a good reason for that. They do not understand enterprise and small firms. They never have. Enterprise and small firms were not included in their last manifesto. I hope that they have woken up to the fact that they will have to include them in the manifesto that they will produce shortly.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley said, there is much more to be done. No one would be so arrogant as to assume that it has all been done. There is an awful lot to be done. But what the Government have already achieved is now showing results. Our economy is now producing more than ever before. We have had the longest period of continuous growth since the 1973 oil price rise. *[Interruption.]* During the 1980s, we have grown faster than any other major European country — a sharp contrast with the 1960s and the 1970s when the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) was in power. I do not think he has anything to shout at from his sedentary position or from any other. Manufacturing output has grown for the past six years and during the 1980s our growth in manufacturing productivity has been the highest of the seven major industrial countries.

Rather than recite all the favourable indicators that we are now seeing on investment, competitiveness, profitability, the creation of new businesses, overseas assets and bank lending rates, perhaps I could endorse the latest Confederation of British Industry survey, the most optimistic survey for many years, as recommended reading for Labour Members who doubt what I have been saying.

I shall now address a few points that have been raised as quickly and precisely as I can. The hon. Member for Heeley talked about trying to create more jobs. He talked about what the Labour party would try to do, what would be in its manifesto and about 1 million new jobs. The Government have done precisely that already, and they intend to continue to do that. There have been more than 1 million new jobs since March 1983 and vacancies are 25 per cent. higher than last year.

Mr. Michie: Paid jobs?

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Gentleman says, "Paid jobs?" He and his hon. Friends continually refer to the fact that it is wrong for the self-employed in this country to be taken out of the unemployment count. Does the hon. Gentleman have the guts to tell someone who is self-employed that he is not doing a serious job? He might just get a dusty answer. He would be the last person to know anything about self-employment and enterprise.

Employment has grown for 15 successive quarters — the longest period of continuous growth for almost 30 years. Employment growth since March 1983 is higher than in the rest of the European Community combined. It is important that we get this message across, and over the coming weeks we shall do that. Unemployment has fallen for eight successive months by nearly 180,000 and is now at the lowest level since September 1984. Unemployment seasonally adjusted has fallen by 25,000 per month on average over the last six months, which is the fastest fall since 1973, and faster than any other industrial country.

The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) referred to fiddling of the figures. She, along with other Opposition Members, ought to be reminded that the last change in March 1986 was to remove substantial over-recording of people who had already left the count. It was a once-and-for-all change well before unemployment started falling. One of the changes we have made is to take those people who were regarded as being self-employed out of the unemployment count. Why should we not do that?

In view of the criticism we have received about the level of unemployment now falling and the success of Government measures over the past eight months, my right hon. and hon. Friends could be forgiven for suggesting that perhaps Labour Members did not want to see the fall in the level of unemployment, that they did not want us to succeed and that they are upset about the fact that we have succeeded.

The hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon), who talked about the quality of life, ought to be reminded that when the Labour party was last in office a married man with two children on average earnings had an increase in real take-home pay of only half of 1 per cent. Under the Government there has been an increase in real take-home pay of nearly 18 per cent. since 1979. Someone similarly placed on half average earnings has had an average increase of 15 per cent. compared with an increase of only 4 per cent. under Labour. What price quality of life under the Labour Government?

Since 1979, resources for education have reached record levels. In 1986-87, education spending totalled £16 billion. Spending per pupil increased from £895 in 1979 to £1,065 in 1985, an increase of 19 per cent. in real terms, compared to a fall of 1·6 per cent. between 1974 and 1979 when the Labour Government were last in office.

I say to the hon. Member for Leyton that all responsible political parties should be concerned with improving the quality of life of all citizens. I stress the word "responsible" because any responsible party elected to Government would regard as its first and principal priority the defence of this nation and of its people. That must be the first priority. Compared to that, everything else comes second. If we do not have a credible defence policy, it is futile to talk about the quality of life or even life itself. During these coming weeks, we shall highlight the differences between ourselves and the Socialists, and between ourselves and the alliance on the issue. We shall also highlight the difference within the alliance between the SDP and the Liberals on the subject.

The second priority for any responsible Government must be to create the right economic environment in which industry can succeed. Governments do not create wealth, but people in industry, trade and commerce do. That point seems to have been lost on the hon. Member for Leeds, Central. It is vital that we build on the success achieved. Our gross domestic product is at the highest level ever in our seventh successive year of economic growth. This is the only way that we can produce the necessary money that we need to see spent on improvements in health care, pensions, housing and schools to continue to improve the quality of life for all. It is demonstrably daft substantially to tax out of all existence those industries and individuals whose enterprise provides that money at the end of the day. Yet both the Socialists and the alliance make clear that they intend to do just that. They never learn. The last Labour Government, propped up by the Liberals, presided over a stagnant economy in which industry simply could not provide the wherewithal for that Government to spend on improving the quality of life in the nation.

Even with the disgrace of borrowing from the International Monetary Fund, they had to impose massive cuts in the Health Service capital spending programme. They decreased teachers' salaries by 13 per cent. in real terms compared to the increase of 27 per cent. that we have given during the period that we have been in office. That stagnant economy meant that they were able to increase pensioners' net income by only 0·6 per cent. a year in real terms, compared to the increase of 2·7 per cent. under us. They even had to resort to withdrawing the pensioners' Christmas bonus, a particularly mean and spiteful thing to do and not worthy of any responsible Government. I do not know——

It being Seven o'clock the Proceedings on the motion lapsed, pursuant to Standing Order No. 13 (Arrangement of public business).

Business of the House

7 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): Further to my statement earlier today, the business for the rest of the week will now be as follows:

TUESDAY 12 MAY—Committee and remaining stages of the Finance Bill.

Remaining stages of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill *[Lords]*.

Remaining stages of the Family Law Reform Bill *[Lords]*.

Remaining stages of the Local Government Bill followed by proceedings on the Diplomatic and Consular Premises Bill.

Consideration of Lords amendments to Commons amendments to the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Bill *[Lords]*.

Proceedings on the Housing (Scotland) Bill *[Lords]*, which is a consolidation measure.

Motion on the Parliamentary Constituencies (England) (Miscellaneous Changes) (No. 2) Order.

Motion on the Employment Subsidies Act 1978 (Renewal) (Great Britain) Order.

At Ten o'clock the Question will be put on all outstanding Supplementary Estimates and Votes.

WEDNESDAY 13 MAY — Consideration of Lords amendments to the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill.

Proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill.

Committee and remaining stages of the Consumer Protection Bill *[Lords]*.

Committee and remaining stages of the Parliamentary and Other Pensions Bill.

Motion on the Lord Chancellor's Salary Order.

Motions on the Channel Tunnel Bill, the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing Bill and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Bill.

THURSDAY 14 MAY — Consideration of Lords amendments to the Criminal Justice Bill.

Consideration of Lords amendments to the Parliamentary and Health Service Commissioners Bill.

Proceedings on the Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Bill *[Lords]*, followed by Committee and remaining stages of the Territorial Sea Bill *[Lords]*.

Consideration of Lords amendments to the Registered Establishments (Scotland) Bill, which is a private Member's Bill.

FRIDAY 15 MAY—The House may be asked to consider any other Government business before being adjourned.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): In observing the reactions to the right hon. Gentleman's statement and to the trailer that he gave at half-past three, I was reminded of the saying of Sir Robert Walpole on the day of the outbreak of the war of Jenkin's Ear. Listening to the crowds crying behind him and in front of him, Sir Robert said:

> "They now ring the bells, but they will soon wring their hands."

I am sure that we all share the sense of occasion, both because we have heard the last business statement of this Parliament and because we have listened to the swan-song of a very civilised Leader of the House. The change of business is welcome. Can the right hon. Gentleman confirm that the Government have lost four fifths of their Finance Bill, most of the Criminal Justice Bill, and all but a few clauses of the Local Government Bill, and that they will get the Scottish poll tax Bill only if they successfully vote us down on the guillotine motion on Wednesday?

Will the Leader of the House also confirm that the Opposition have prevented the railroading of the Parliamentary Constituencies (England) (Miscellaneous Changes) Orders Nos. 2 and 3 which at virtually the last moment would have changed the boundaries of no fewer than 50 constituencies, including several marginals? This is deathbed gerrymandering.

For the promotion of greater understanding, can the right hon. Gentleman confirm that we are right in believing that Dissolution will take place before the House meets on Monday and that there will be no Prorogation ceremony?

Mr. Biffen: I shall deal first with the right hon. Gentleman's last point. It is anticipated that the House will adjourn on Friday and that Parliament will be dissolved before 2.30 pm on Monday 18 May. In those circumstances, the House will not have to meet on Monday 18 May. I can confirm that there will be no Prorogation ceremony.

The right hon. Gentleman made several other points. In all charity, I hope that he will attend to these matters of controversy with rather more professionalism when he gets to the hustings in the east end. Any attempt to judge from some esoteric references and a historical analogy with Walpole about the wringing of hands comes down to the real question: who will be wringing whose hands?

It would have been most high-handed to seek to secure the passage of the entire Finance Bill and of the entire Criminal Justice Bill during the few days that are left in this Parliament. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that these are all matters of sound legislation deferred and will be there for the next Parliament to confirm with an appropriate majority.

The right hon. Gentleman tried to manufacture a most extraordinary stone wall with a few wisps of straw in suggesting that there was some design to railroad the Bill on parliamentary boundaries. Even though we have had some unseemly precedents from the Opposition, there was never any question of the House being invited to confirm boundary changes of the character that he identifies within a few days of the House being dissolved.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): Does the Leader of the House anticipate that the usual channels will agree that the Landlord and Tenant (No. 2) Bill should get Royal Assent?

Mr. Biffen: I shall look at that, but my hon. Friend will find that that Bill is in another place.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Will the Leader of the House confirm that all but about a dozen clauses of the 130-clause Criminal Justice Bill have been dropped? Does he not believe that it would have been better to drop the proposals to bring in the new Scottish rating procedures rather than use a guillotine which will be unpopular in many parts of the House? The Leader of the House suggested yesterday in a television interview that arrogance in government is an unacceptable practice. That very arrogance will be shown in pushing through this unpopular poll tax measure.

Mr. Biffen: When the House has a chance to see what part of the Criminal Justice Bill will be presented for consideration and determination, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will believe that the clauses are well worth the support of the House. If the alliance parties decide to vote against them, that will be noted and will take its place in the election campaign. As for the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill, the timetable motion that made provision for supplementary orders was passed on 11 February. That is known to be a central part of the Government's policy, and they are perfectly entitled to take the measures that they now propose.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Will the motion on the Channel Tunnel Bill be wide enough to enable the Government to make a statement on the discussions over the weekend between British Rail and the Channel Tunnel group, or will it be purely procedural? In view of the short time allowed for the remaining stages of the Consumer Protection Bill, can my right hon. Friend ensure that the Minister concerned will show the same flexibility and charm to Conservative Front Benchers with minor reservations about some aspects of the Bill as he has shown to Opposition Members?

Mr. Biffen: I have admired the ability of my hon. Friend to elicit charm and co-operation from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on the Consumer Protection Bill, and I am sure that that will continue over the next few days. As for his point about the Channel Tunnel Bill, whether he can make the points that he wishes to make will be in the determination of the Chair.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): Will the Leader of the House say a brief word about the effect of his statement on the meetings of Committees upstairs?

Mr. Biffen: I am advised that Committees set to meet this week to consider Bills and statutory instruments will do so, with the exception of Standing Committee A, on the Parliamentary and Other Pensions Bill, and Standing Committee D, on the Consumer Protection Bill. Those two Committees will now be taken on the Floor of the House. Committees set down for next week will obviously not sit.

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): As we shall clearly have all the parliamentary time in the world between now and the end of the week, may I take it that one of the measures that my right hon. Friend may have in mind for Friday is the one foreshadowed by our right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on Saturday—the long overdue intention to deal with the penetration of our fishing fleet by foreign interests? Will it be taken in all its stages on Friday? If my right hon. Friend is going to disappoint me, will he give an assurance that the measure will be at the top of the Government's list of priorities when they are returned with a massive majority on 11 June?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend played an active part in campaigning for that legislation. I can confirm his second supposition, and will see whether his first question can be met.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): May I express my commiserations with the right hon. Gentleman, who has been an excellent, witty, pleasant and fairly fair Leader of the House, on his final disappearance from the Front Bench? May I also say, however, that we shall feel much less regret about the political demise of most of the Government Front Bench? Is not the conglomeration of rubbish that we have to get through this week one of the best reasons for fixed-term Parliaments?

Mr. Biffen: I shall have to observe the generous premise to the hon. Gentleman's question—which, however, will do me no good whatever in Shropshire, North. As to the fixed Parliament argument, such arguments will doubtless go on. However, as it is now one of the prized arguments of the alliance parties, I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman sees himself in a future bridge-building role.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): We have heard about the ringing of bells and the wringing of hands, but does my right hon. Friend agree that the most important question is who will be kissing hands after the election? Are we not all agreed that it will be my right hon. Friend the Member for Finchley (Mrs. Thatcher), and that she will remain the first Minister of the land?

Mr. Biffen: That is a most pertinent observation.

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): Does the Leader of the House agree that the Gracious Speech has been virtually decimated by his statement today? How many of the proposals in the Gracious Speech have been carried through in the present Parliament? Not only has the right hon. Gentleman's statement today decimated the Government's legislative programme, but for the past two months, in preparation for this cut-and-run election, Secretaries of State have come to the Dispatch Box abandoning statements and proposals made in the Queen's Speech — notably the Secretary of State for the Environment, who abandoned the proposal for the privatisation of water. Is it not true that the Government have been preparing for an opportunist early election for the past three months?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman overlooks the fact that the business for the remainder of this week confirms the passing of a substantial amount of legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Questions should be confined to the business for the rest of this week.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the clause in the Finance Bill that, above all others, highlights the difference between the Conservative and Labour approaches to taxation, clause 20, which reduces the standard rate of tax from 29 per cent. to 27 per cent., will be secure?

Mr. Biffen: I have absolutely no doubt that it will be secure.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Why can we not have a statement on the Guinness affair? Is it because the Leader of the House and Ministers are once again dragging their feet and do not want the matter to be debated in Parliament? In so far as the Guinness affair, and a number of other City scandals of the past few years, will come centre stage in the next general election campaign as we show up the deficiencies in contemporary Conservativism, why cannot the Leader of the House ensure that the House has the opportunity to debate those matters before the weekend?

Mr. Biffen: I have presented a fairly brisk programme to the House for the remaining few days——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Drop the poll tax.

Mr. Biffen: Of course, I take note of the hon. Gentleman's request that there should be a statement on what he likes to call the Guinness affair.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that on Tuesday, when we debate the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill, two amendments tabled in my name—if they are judged to be in order and are called—will give us an opportunity to talk about the Guinness affair?

Mr. Biffen: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's guidance. I am sure that it will not be lost on Opposition Members.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): Will the Leader of the House confirm that he will be asking you, Mr. Speaker, to give preference in the debates during the remainder of the week to those droves of Conservative Members who will not be re-elected on 11 June?

Mr. Biffen: I am happy to confirm that I have never sought to give guidance to you, Mr. Speaker, on who should be called to speak.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): Will my right hon. Friend tell us whether there will be a statement before the end of the week on Government launch aid for the A330/A340 project?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend raises an important point. I cannot answer immediately, but I shall refer it to my right hon. Friends who will be making any such decision.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): Will the Leader of the House tell us why it is not gerrymandering to withdraw the Parliamentary Constituencies (England) (Miscellaneous Changes) No. 3 Order, when it was named for business on Thursday of last week and was tabled only a few days after the No. 2 order? It would appear that only the No. 2 order is to be taken. The other order deals merely with minor anomalies which it would be sensible to put right.

Mr. Biffen: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman, who is a fair controversialist, will acknowledge that the Home Secretary has an obligation to lay such matters. Whether Parliament then proceeds is a different consideration.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): First, will the Leader of the House tell us what will be the procedure for dealing with the private business that was due to be discussed tomorrow, and the 30 or so private Bills before the House?

Secondly, may I give the right hon. Gentleman one last opportunity to let his hair down and tell the House the answer to this question? He has announced a great deal of business, and a great deal has fallen. The Government have an overall majority of 138. Although the Opposition welcome the opportunity to go to the polls and defeat the Government, is this not yet another example of too much power lying in the hands of one person — the Prime Minister — who is able to call an election not to serve the interests of the country or the business of the House, but purely to serve the narrow interests of her party? In a democracy, is that not far too much power to reside in one pair of hands?

Mr. Biffen: If the hon. Gentleman thinks that these matters are held in one pair of hands, it is a somewhat naive interpretation of how political authority is exercised.

As for the point that is of more immediate relevance to next week's business, no other private Members' Bill is coming to us for the consideration of amendments made in another place other than that to which I have referred. In accordance with precedent, such Bills that have reached this advanced stage are afforded an opportunity to be passed, otherwise it is, by convention, not the occasion to find time for private Members' Bills and private Members' business has been lost.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I was about to say that I would call those hon. Members who have been rising. I must draw the attention of the House to the fact that a very important debate is to follow the business statement. I urge hon. Members not to make the speeches that they might make during the election but to confine their questions to the Leader of the House to the business for this week.

Mr. Robert C. Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): It is generally agreed—and I concur with the view—that the Leader of the House is fundamentally an extremely decent man and that he has been an extremely good Leader of the House. As the building of the Channel Tunnel would have a profoundly bad effect on the north-east of England, will he do the decent thing by burying it and leaving it to the next Parliament to decide?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman has made generous but wholly unmerited remarks about me, which leads me to say that he could do so only because of his misconception about the likely future of the Channel Tunnel Bill. What is being proposed will enable the Bill to be available to the next Parliament, and then we shall see what course is taken.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Does the Leader of the House's statement mean that the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Bill will not be passed this week? If so, will he tell his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that immigration officers at ports of entry should stop acting as though the Bill had already become law and that they should revert to the practice that operated before this particularly disgraceful piece of legislation was ever brought before the House? Will he also ensure that at this moment the Kurdish asylum seekers from Iraq are released on temporary admission and that their case is properly considered by the Home Secretary, as he is bound to do within the terms of the Geneva convention?

Mr. Biffen: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman appreciates that the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Bill is in another place. I cannot in any sense accept his comments on Home Office officials, but as he requests that the attention of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary should be drawn to his anxieties, I shall see that that is done.

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): Since my right hon. Friend has said that right hon. and hon. Members will be Members of Parliament until Monday, is he able to say when returning officers will be able to issue the documents so that hon. Members can forward their nominations, bearing in mind that there is to be a bank holiday?

Mr. Biffen: I am touched that my hon. Friend should feel that that falls within the responsibilities of the Leader of the House. I do not have the faintest idea what is the answer to his question, but I shall look into the matter and see what can be done.

Nuclear Power

7.23 pm

The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Peter Walker): I beg to move,

That this House, recognising the advantages to the country of having a diversity of energy supply, including coal, gas, oil and nuclear power, welcomes the Secretary of State for Energy's decision to give consent to the construction of the Sizewell B PWR and thus recognises the important contribution that nuclear energy is making and will continue to make to the provision of cheap and efficient electricity and the strength of the British economy; also recognises that the industry is a major source of employment; and deplores the policies of the Opposition parties that would sacrifice that employment.

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Walker: This is an important debate. In fact, one could argue that it is a historic debate. We on this side of the House have been anxious to hold it, but since the announcement of the Sizewell B decision, one of the most remarkable factors has been the seeming lack of enthusiasm by the Opposition to hold such a debate and discussion. Their passive approach to this problem has been remarkable. Not one Opposition spokesman took part in a debate on the Consolidated Fund Bill. Recently a Committee decided to provide £500 million for British Nuclear Fuels but nobody, either from the Labour party or the alliance, even turned up for the Committee sittings. We have been under no pressure to hold this debate. It was only because we were eager that there should be a debate that time is being provided this evening for it.

The same is true of the protests of our countrymen. Before publishing the Sizewell report, I warned my Department that it must be ready to handle the substantial volume of post that was likely to follow its publication. I announced later that we received fewer than 300 letters. I presumed that people were waiting for my decision before they wrote, but since I made my decision on the Sizewell report, we have received fewer than 100 letters. Therefore, the great campaign that was suggested by the Opposition parties has not taken place.

I want to probe the reasons and to suggest to the House that it is vital for this country always to have available a diverse energy supply, if that is at all possible. We are very lucky, in that we have very good reserves of coal, oil and gas. There is a great deal of activity over energy efficiency and renewable energy, and there is a very substantial nuclear industry.

During the last six years, this Government's policy has been to ensure that all those options remain active and are advanced. The productivity figures now being reached by the coal industry were not dreamt of by the last Labour Government, and, despite the drop in the international price of oil, there has been more exploration for gas and oil reserves in the North sea during the last two years than at any time since exploration started. I welcome the fact that the alliance and the Labour party are now beginning to take an interest in energy efficiency. When the Labour Government were in power—I include the period of the Lib-Lab pact — there was quite remarkable inactivity over energy efficiency.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Will the Secretary of State tell the House by how much energy consumption was reduced in the last year for which figures are available when the campaign was running?

Mr. Walker: During that year production was rising substantially, the economy was improving and there is plenty of evidence that hundreds of millions of pounds were saved through energy efficiency. I repeat that during the period of the Lib-Lab pact nothing was done about energy efficiency. Their policy was deplorable.

As for renewables, the anti-nuclear lobby — in this connection I include the Opposition's motion—says that the Government should do more about them. While this Government have been in power we have spent £100 million on research into the various forms of renewable energy. Throughout the four years of the Labour Government, and the Lib-Lab pact, the total was not £100 million but £7 million. That shows their total lack of interest in both energy efficiency and renewables.

The nuclear industry has been developing fast worldwide during the last 30 years. In 1956, we embarked for the first time, on the application of nuclear energy for civil purposes. It is remarkable that in 1986 the amount of electricity that was generated worldwide by the nuclear industry equalled the whole of the amount of electricity that was generated in 1956. That shows the enormous role that the nuclear industry has played in the development of energy policies worldwide. The pace worldwide is not declining; it is accelerating. Both the alliance and the Labour party will have to come to terms with the fact that while every one of our major competitors is going down the nuclear route at an accelerating pace they have decided to destroy the nuclear industry in this country.

France has under construction more nuclear reactors than the entire volume of existing British nuclear reactors. Germany is to complete four new nuclear reactors by 1990. Japan has decided to increase its nuclear capacity by 40 per cent. by 1995, and it has decided to embark on a trillion dollar investment programme after that. The United States has completed 13 new nuclear power stations in the past two years and a further 11 are under construction. That dwarfs any programme in this country. The Soviet Union——

Mr. Stanley Orme (Salford, East): Is it not a fact that the United States has not ordered a new nuclear power station for 10 years?

Mr. Walker: I am afraid that the right hon. Gentleman has always accepted that sort of Greenpeace propaganda. Is he really suggesting that the 13 nuclear power stations to be completed in the next two years were all started 10 years ago?

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): They were ordered.

Mr. Walker: Nonsense. Over a period of five years the Americans will have built and completed 20 to 30 new nuclear power stations. They have a massive nuclear industry.

The Soviet Union has made two important announcements since Chernobyl: first, that it intends to treble its nuclear power programme by 1995 and, secondly, that the programme will involve not Chernobyl-style reactors but pressurised water reactors, because of the safety factors involved. As well as America, Germany, France and the Soviet Union, many Third world countries, including

[Mr. Walker]

India, Pakistan and many South American countries, recognise that nuclear power represents the one available untapped energy supply which can be used to develop their economies.

Opposition Members have made a great contribution to the nuclear industry. Labour Governments have given consents and approvals for power stations and until now the Labour party has always supported the nuclear industry. Its present policy is a complete reverse of that. This will be the first general election in which the Labour party has stood on a platform of destroying the nuclear industry. Opposition Members do not concentrate on the need for improving international safety or on the need for better collaboration or on anything other than an energy policy that will eradicate our nuclear industry over the 20 years of the decline of our North sea oil supplies. Having got rid of the oil and gas industry—its reserves will have been used up—the Labour party will make this country totally dependent upon the National Union of Mineworkers. [*Interruption*]. That is what it is all about. Perhaps we might recall that it was a motion proposed by Arthur Scargill at the last Labour conference that obtained a substantial majority. It said that a Labour Government would eradicate the nuclear industry during the lifetime of a Parliament.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): No.

Mr. Walker: That motion was passed by a large majority. I hope that the country will realise that such a policy would massively damage our energy supplies and massively increase their price.

Mr. Barron: What the Secretary of State said about the Labour party eradicating the nuclear industry in five years —in the lifetime of a Parliament—is not true and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. Walker: I repeat that at the last Labour party conference a motion tabled by Arthur Scargill to abolish the nuclear industry in the lifetime of a Parliament was passed by a very large majority. Would the hon. Gentleman like to deny that?

Mr. Barron: The policy of the Labour party, formulated at the last conference, was to get rid of nuclear power stations not in five-years but at the end of their own lifetime. The right hon. Gentleman knows that quite well.

Mr. Walker: I know that there were two motions. The motion to which the hon. Gentleman referred was carried but the one that would have made the policy favoured by Mr. Scargill mandatory on the Labour party was lost by a handful of votes. If that handful of votes go in favour at the next conference, that will be Labour party policy.

The nuclear industry has considerable advantages to us. It has the national advantage of being a substantial industry and the industry now has £2·5 billion-worth of export orders. It creates jobs for about 150,000 people, and a further 800,000 people in intensive energy-using industries need the safe, secure and cheap supply of energy that the nuclear industry provides. All those jobs are put in great jeopardy by the Labour party's change of policy. The present policy does not recognise the international potential of the industry. It would be disastrous to eradicate that international potential.

The Labour party is endeavouring to conceal that fact. The right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) has been going to power stations round the country telling the employees that it will not happen quickly and that their death will be a slow one, so they need not worry in the immediate future. The hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) has one policy for his constituency — where BNFL operates — and another for the shadow Cabinet. He tells his constituents that no Government would be foolish enough to damage such a great industry and that no country interested in its balance of payments would eradicate the enormous foreign earnings of an organisation such as BNFL. However, the very motion that became Labour party policy states categorically that there will be no further imports of nuclear waste for reprocessing. But anyone who knows anything of BNFL knows that its whole investment programme is related to that and that its future expansion depends on it. Therefore, what the Labour party is really saying to those who work for BNFL is that they have a limited future and one of deep and swift decline and that they cannot contribute to the country's balance of paymants as they would under a Conservative Government. Labour Members pretend that they will continue with BNFL for a while only because of the position of one member of their shadow Cabinet.

The alliance nuclear policy is a perfectly typical alliance policy. The Liberal party has been passionately opposed to nuclear energy for a long time. Anybody who has studied the proceedings of the last Liberal party conference knows that the favoured policy was to get rid of the nuclear industry as quickly as possible. However, the Social Democratic party was not quite so keen. [HON. MEMBERS: "Where are they?"] First, the leader of the Social Democratic party was once a member of a Labour Government who strongly supported the nuclear industry and, secondly, it so happens that a member of the SDP represents Dounreay. The SDP would therefore experience some embarrassment if it went into an election campaign saying "Let's get rid of nuclear power." On the one hand here was Liberal party policy, on the other there was SDP policy, and they were brought together to form the great alliance policy. What is that? In the end, the alliance said, "We shall do nothing. We shall consider it and we shall continue to consider it until after the election. Where we have candidates in areas in which the nuclear industry operates, we shall say that it will probably be all right. Where we have a good green vote, we shall probably say that we shall get rid of it." That is a typical, irresponsible alliance policy, which needs to be exposed vigorously in the campaign.

We examined PWRs with great care before embarking upon the programme. Indeed, we held the biggest inquiry that has ever taken place. We have been the motivators in achieving greater international collaboration on safety. The industry, most of which is based in the north-east and north-west of England and in Scotland, now rejoices that we are moving towards the day when we can use our scientific and technical skills in this vital industry. The international application of those skills and the opportunities in worldwide business will be on an enormous scale. During the lifetime of this Government, we have radically improved the coal industry and our oil and gas industries offshore have become the envy of the world. On nuclear energy, we have had to delay to make the fullest possible inquiry. We now give the go-ahead to create a fine, safe and excellent industry which, the electorate must be aware, the Opposition parties are out to destroy.

7.39 pm

Mr. Stanley Orme (Salford, East): We have heard a typical speech by the Secretary of State putting forward the case that he was not able to put forward when we had a debate on Sizewell. The right hon. Gentleman catalogued what had and what had not been done by the Opposition, but he may remember that we made our position clear in the Sizewell debate. I should like to underline and to reiterate what I said on the Labour party's behalf: we will not proceed with the PWR at Sizewell and a future Labour Government would cancel this order. That is the Labour party's position, and I should like to explain in some detail our reasons for taking that decision.

The design of the PWR is being sold to this country by the American company, Westinghouse. Since 1973, a large number of nuclear stations have been cancelled in the United States, 37 of them Westinghouse PWR stations. The Secretary of State went into some detail on the number of nuclear stations coming on stream in the United States, but not one nuclear station has been ordered in the United States in the past 10 years. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the Japanese, but Japan, Sweden, Austria, Italy and many other countries are examining their position.

Mr. Peter Walker: I must correct this myth about the United States. I shall give the exact figures. In the United States, over the past three years, 18 new nuclear power stations have been completed; over the past two years, 12 have been completed; and, by 1995, another 13 will have been completed. The construction on the majority of those power stations started after Three Mile Island. That programme dwarfs our programme.

Mr. Orme: The Secretary of State has not refuted the fact that I gave — that not one new order has been placed in the United States in the past 10 years. The attitude of the American electricity utilities to the PWR was summed up by Robert Scherer, the pro-nuclear power chairman of Georgia Power, as reported in *Time* magazine. He said:

> "No utility executive in this country would consider ordering one today"—

that is, a Westinghouse PWR. Westinghouse has moved on and is now, in collaboration with a Japanese company, developing another PWR design. We are asked to approve already out-dated technology.

In 1979, the then Conservative Secretary of State for Energy announced a large and rapid expansion of nuclear power. This was, of course, an integral part of the Conservative Government's political programme. However, that has not proved possible. The present Secretary of State for Energy is the first since then to have given consent to the construction of new nuclear capacity. He has clearly explained his hostility to coal as opposed to nuclear, and we take note of that. The decision to construct new nuclear capacity is based, we are told, on cost and need. I did not hear the Secretary of State say anything about cost this evening. Neither of those criteria stands up to scrutiny and we must therefore assume that this decision remains integral to the broader political programme of the Conservatives.

The standards used in determining the cost of nuclear power have always been dubious. The standards used in the inquiry into the construction of a PWR at Sizewell are flawed in a number of ways. First, there are the capital costs. We cannot ignore the record of construction of nuclear power stations in this country. Not a single nuclear power station has been built to cost or has performed to specification. Construction time overruns have ranged from 61 per cent. to 254 per cent. In the United States, the average construction time for a Westinghouse PWR has been 127·6 months compared with the CEGB's 90-month estimate—a 40 per cent. difference. The CEGB claims that the experience of the AGRs is not comparable, yet the construction of the PWR in this country is untried and unproved. The capital costs of Sizewell B have soared since the inquiry closed. The central estimate taken by Layfield was £1·18 billion. The CEGB's latest estimate is £65 million more than that—before a single brick has been laid. Previous experience can lead us to construe only that those costs will continue to escalate.

Secondly, Sir Frank Layfield rejected the CEGB's evidence on competing fuel costs. Two projections which he accepted were those of the National Coal Board on coal prices and the cost impact analysis of the independent company, Cambridge Energy Research Ltd. That evidence was heard by the inspector — note this — in 1983, and prepared even earlier. Time has moved on and the situation has changed dramatically. Sir Frank Layfield was not able to take those changes into account because of the inquiry's length—I do not criticise that—but the Secretary of State has an obligation to do so. British Coal's estimate on coal prices has almost halved since its 1983 forecast. The fact that fossil fuel prices are now much lower than the central estimates used by Layfield has a crucial impact on the economics of Sizewell.

The Cambridge group, which provided Layfield's committee with an independent model—a model which, he says, was not criticised at the time — has now published a report which takes into account changes since 1983. The Cambridge group said:

> "the results of our analysis do not correspond with the general economic conclusions drawn from the Sizewell report . . . it would appear that the probability of coal being able to compete on economic grounds with nuclear power is substantially above the 2·5 per cent. indicated in the Sizewell Report."

The group's report highlighted the economic risks associated with pursuing the nuclear option, particularly in relation to capital cost overruns, exchange rate fluctuations and upward pressure on discount rates. It reached the following conclusion:

> "Do the results of the study confirm the view often held by senior planners in both government and utilities that nuclear power will inevitably offer significant economic advantages over coal? We believe the answer is 'no'".

We heard not a word tonight from the Secretary of State about the future costs of the PWR. As the analysis by the Cambridge group played such a vital role in the conclusions reached in the Layfield report, is not its up-to-date analysis of the same value to the Government, or is the Secretary of State prepared to accept independent evidence only when it matches the Government's prejudices?

Thirdly, the Layfield report takes no account of the national income, of other resources or of the "fifth fuel" — energy conservation. We have heard a lot tonight about energy conservation. The Labour party has

[Mr. Orme]

campaigned vigorously on the issue of conservation and will continue to do so. We look at what has been done by the Government. Much more can and will be done by a Labour Government. Layfield suggested that the Government might consider the effects of the construction of Sizewell B and other PWRs on employment in the coal industry. If that has been done, it certainly has not been made public. The Secretary of State should make public any such review. The exclusion of wider economic considerations, such as job losses and the impact on trade, is yet a further reason to reject the inspector's conclusions.

None of the evidence suggests that the construction of Sizewell will lead to lower electricity bills for the consumer. On the contrary, the latest estimate suggests that it would add to them. The Secretary of State has provided us with no real justification for his decision in the light of those changes and has failed to convince us that, given that the assumption of economic benefits has been destroyed, there is any need for the construction of Sizewell B.

The demand for capacity could be satisfied in other ways, through new coal-fired stations or through the refurbishment of existing ones. To provide alternatives for the future there should be real commitment to developing combined heat and power and renewable sources of energy.

Sir Frank Ladyfield was less than reassuring about safety. After frequent criticisms of the nuclear installations inspectorate and the CEGB on specific safety considerations he concluded that such matters could be left in their hands. He asserted that a catastrophic accident

"would almost certainly not occur."

How reminiscent that would sound to those people in the Soviet Union who, before Chernobyl, were told that that could not happen there.

Certainly the reactor type at Chernobyl is different. We are not suggesting that an identical disaster could happen in United Kingdom reactors. I have said on previous occasions, and I repeat now, that the British nuclear industry is probably the safest in the world. Although I say that without equivocation, it does not mean that accidents will not or cannot happen. We must take into account the undeniable potential for human error. Both of the major accidents in nuclear power stations, Three Mile Island in the United States and Chernobyl in the Soviet Union, have been directly attributed to human error. Wherever people control technology, there is the possibility of mistakes.

Other factors contribute to human error. Professor James Reason, the head of psychology at Manchester university, has studied this and concluded that the ingredients for disastrous human error unfortunately prevail in Britain also. He stated:

> "The systems are complicated and a plague to the people running them . . . We have operators that don't understand everything that is going on. We have monolithic management structures. We have complex systems that make violations of operating procedures inevitable."

The Government must take that seriously and answer it.

Our nuclear watchdog cannot cope with its work load. In the debate this afternoon, reference was made to Mr. Eddie Ryder, the chief inspector of nuclear installations, who told the Energy Select Committee only last week that the trade union that represents nuclear inspectors stated:

> "Sizewell will involve more work from the nuclear inspectorate when it can't cope with its present workload".

Nor, on its own admission, does the inspectorate have enough staff and resources to assess the lessons of Chernobyl. Mr. Ryder told the Select Committee:

> "if we do not keep up, then we may miss something. These problems may accumulate."

I ask the Secretary of State what action he is taking, following Mr. Ryder's statement to the Select Committee?

Mr. Peter Walker: I am delighted to inform the right hon. Gentleman that I took action before that statement was made to the Select Committee. Last September we reviewed the salaries on Mr. Ryder's suggestion and increased them by £3,500. Further recruitment has taken place since then and quite a number of people have been recruited. Mr. Ryder and I share the objective of having 120 inspectors in place by the end of the year. My Parliamentary Secretary discussed with Mr. Ryder the comparative positions and put proposals to the Treasury, which were accepted. Further increases in salary are being made so there is no possibility of the inspectorate not recruiting its full establishment.

Mr. Orme: I welcome that important statement. Mr. Ryder highlighted the problem to the Select Committee and brought it to a head, and if the Government have taken that on board, I shall not criticise that. I am concerned about the safety of those people who work in the nuclear industry. Their safety is essential.

The country is still suffering the after-effects of Chernobyl, and is still paying the price of that. This country is ill-equipped to deal with monitoring the safety of new nuclear power stations. Mr. Ryder raised that issue also. The people of this country have no confidence in the bland assurances given to them by the Government and the CEGB.

The Labour party's opposition to this development has not and will not change. As I have already said, we shall not build the PWR in this country. When the Labour Government come into office we shall cancel any such measure. We shall reduce the risk of nuclear power, not increase it. Contrary to the Government's propaganda, our policy on nuclear power is responsible and realistic.

Our Magnox stations are nearly all over 20 years old. The design of that first generation of nuclear power plant is obsolete and, according to the nuclear inspectorate, would no longer be granted a licence to operate. Corrosion problems have proved worse than the designers expected. The Labour party will turn its attention to such stations. Our plans to phase out those older stations will involve many years of work on decommissioning and will mean more work on reprocessing at Sellafield, with increased emphasis on improving environmental considerations.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): The right hon. Gentleman mentioned Magnox stations. I wholly disagree with his comments about safety. In the light of his statement, will he state in which year the Labour party will begin to decommission the two Magnox stations at Calder Hall and Chapelcross?

Mr. Orme: Calder Hall is already in the process of being decommissioned. When I visited it, I met some of the people working on it. I was quoting the comments of the nuclear inspectorate, which stated that today it would not give a licence to a Magnox station. Those were not my words.

Mr. Keith Best (Ynys Môn): The right hon. Gentleman will recall that some time ago, shortly after Chernobyl, Greenpeace published a full-page advertisement in several national newspapers listing all power stations, those in the first category that it thought should be closed immediately, and those in the latter category that should be phased out. Is he aware—I thought it was an oversight at the time—that Wylfa in my constituency did not appear on either of the lists? When I contacted Greenpeace about that, it said that it had deliberately omitted it because it was perfectly satisfied about its safety. Why will the right hon. Gentleman's party close down Wylfa and not replace it?

Mr. Orme: I said that we shall assess all the Magnox and older stations and then start to phase them out. That assessment will be made when the Labour party is in government and in a position to decide.

The construction and refurbishment of coal-fired stations will create up to 30,000 jobs, with many more involved in our drive to develop renewable sources of energy and combined heat and power, to carry out a major programme of insulation and draught-proofing of people's homes, and to revive the coal industry. Jobs in power engineering and in research and development into the problems of nuclear waste will be maintained and others created. More staff are clearly needed to ensure the safety of existing nuclear power stations, and to develop methods of decommissioning.

We believe in creating jobs that respond to the needs of the nation, in manufacturing, construction and power generation. That is the basis on which we shall conduct our energy policy. The Government have had an irresponsible and irrational approach to meeting the nation's energy requirements. They have never shown the slightest concern about workers losing their jobs, or about the state of manufacturing industry.

We shall plan to meet the country's needs, to create jobs and to ensure the safety of people and the environment. We welcome the chance to put this issue before the British people at the general election.

7.58 pm

Mr. Norman Miscampbell (Blackpool, North): I shall be brief and simply mention one or two matters which arose from the investigations of the Environment Select Committee. We almost inevitably concentrated on nuclear waste, so we were bound to learn of the environmental consequences of not following the nuclear road.

It became abundantly clear on an environmental calculation that, provided a nuclear accident was prevented, the production of electricity from nuclear power was considerably more benign than from coal. Coal has inevitable unhappy environmental consequences, even with the scrubbers in place.

The great anxiety about nuclear energy arises from the public's perception of it. It is extraordinary that Sellafield appears in the press month by month and, at times, week by week. We are seeking to cure radiation leaks from Sellafield costing about £250 million, yet less than three times that amount of radiation comes from ill-protected medical equipment which could be cured for a fraction of the cost. It is entirely a matter of public perception.

What we are prepared to agree to by way of danger is also a matter of public perception. By the time the debate has finished in about three hours, two people will have died on the roads, and, by the time we prorogue at the end of the week, about 100 will have died. The public face that with a great deal more equanimity than the much less real problems arising from nuclear power stations.

The Secretary of State said that all our competitors were following this road at varying paces. Indeed, they are following it fast, regardless of what they say. The case of France is most pertinent. Between 50 and 60 per cent. of its electricity is generated by nuclear power and several French nuclear power stations are nearer to where we stand now than is Sizewell. The French will not stop. What is more, whatever nit-picking questions are raised about costs, the French export electricity to every neighbour, including the United Kingdom.

Mr. Michael McGuire (Makerfield): What about the enormous debt involved?

Mr. Miscampbell: I shall not go into the French economy, but it is undoubtedly in remarkably good shape.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): Does the hon. and learned Gentleman accept that Elecricite de France is the largest corporate debtor in the world and is largely responsible for the fact that France is the third biggest debtor nation in the world? Does he further accept that, although the Secretary of State will not give the figures, the French electricity industry exports at below cost price for economic opportunity?

Mr. Miscampbell: I know that that is said, but extremely acute economists and business men, as the French are, continue with nuclear energy, and they do not do so to court bankruptcy. They can make their calculations as well as anybody.

We, too, must bear in mind what the consequences will be. In my constituency, for example, unemployment is running at 14 per cent., in Whitehaven it is 11 per cent. and in Preston it is 11 per cent. Will we improve those figures by turning our backs on the technological revolution in this sphere as in every other? We in the Conservative party are not asking that we follow a solely nuclear policy. We are a long way behind many of our competitors and we produce a much lower proportion of energy through nuclear plants. We are merely saying that we should progress steadily down a technical road which will be inevitable in the next century. There is no way that anything else will produce our electricity at competitive prices in the next 50 years.

Mr. Barron: The hon. and learned Gentleman talks about the cost of electricity generation in 50 years' time. Does he know that the Layfield report could hardly look 10 years ahead? The Secretary of State dodged the issue altogether. How can the hon. and learned Gentleman tell us what the price of electricity generated by any fuel will be in 50 years' time?

Mr. Miscampbell: The hon. Gentleman has mistaken what I said. Obviously, we have coal and there is much cheaper coal in the world which we shall not import. I am saying that it does not matter what the price will be in 50 years' time and that the only way demand for electricity can be met then will be through a nuclear-based industry. There is no possibility of the world producing the electricity required by burning fossil fuels.

Mr. Barron: Talk about Britain.

Mr. Miscampbell: I am taking about the world.

Nuclear energy is inevitable. The Government have taken a modest step and they are right in saying that we should continue down this road because it will give us a balance between coal, which fortunately we have, and nuclear power, which is a path we should follow.

8.5 pm

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Mr. Speaker, who preceded you in the Chair, Mr. Deputy Speaker, announced that the amendment in the name of the leader of the Labour party had been accepted. During the past four years, I have become used to hearing that announcement, but it has a couple of consequences that I should like to put on the record. First, it means that the alliance must again choose between voting for a Tory motion and a Labour amendment, although our motion is on the Order Paper. The public should know that opportunities to vote on our amendments are strictly limited. Secondly, I look forward to returning to the House on 15 June when I may speak from a different place and when, perhaps, our amendments will be selected on a more regular basis.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): As the policy of the SDP conference was the same as that of the Conservative party and the policy of the Liberal conference the same as that of the Labour party, should that not make it easy for individual alliance Members to know how to vote?

Mr. Bruce: I am not sure that the Secretary of State has addressed himself to the progress that has been made, but over the next four weeks he will discover that we have a policy on this and every other issue which is clear and coherent and which will command a great deal more support than he and his party would like to see.

Although the Secretary of State for Energy has left the Chamber, I wish to reply to one or two points that he raised. I welcome the great regard that he and, indeed, his colleagues have for the energy of the Liberal party. What we failed to achieve during the 15 months of the Lib-Lab pact would fill three full Parliaments of any normal Government. I appreciate that Tory Members know that we have considerable talent and energy, but it is unreasonable to suggest that, because policies were not implemented at that time, they will not be implemented in future. The real answer to that is, give us a chance to run the country and we shall show what will be implemented.

The Secretary of State made a sarcastic jibe about our apparent commitment to energy efficiency. My personal commitment goes back many years before I was elected to this House. Moreover, energy efficiency is and remains the apex of our policy because it alone achieves most for the least pounds expended. Despite the Government's trumpeting and great publicity about their commitment to energy efficiency, they have achieved little.

The Secretary of State could not answer me other than to admit that during Energy Efficiency Year energy consumption in the United Kingdom rose substantially, although the stated objective of the Energy Efficiency Year was to reduce energy consumption by 20 per cent., which is far more than the growth in the economy would have required. If the policy had been successful, we should have been able to sustain economic recovery and reduce overall consumption. Indeed, most of our continental competitors have not only achieved or gone far towards achieving the first 20 per cent., but are now considering ways of achieving the next 20 per cent. In this sector the Government have failed conspicuously to respond to the challenge.

The Secretary of State referred to the expansion of nuclear power elsewhere. However, with a few conspicuous exceptions most countries—most of which are politically vulnerable and have no alternative sources of energy — are reviewing nuclear power, and nuclear developments are being curtailed. The use of the United States as an example by the Secretary of State is becoming a tired old chestnut which does not stand up to analysis. The reason why nuclear power stations are being completed in the United States is that they have been delayed by so many bankruptcies, cost overruns and design changes, and power stations that should have been completed years ago are still under construction, and many people have been locked into considerable financial disadvantage.

The Secretary of State used the argument that we need to go further and more rapidly down the path of nuclear power because the oil and gas fields are running out. Oil and gas are not major fuels for electricity generation, and they are certainly not the most efficient way of producing electricity, so one does not effectively substitute for the other. I represent a constituency which is heavily dependent on North sea oil activity. We take a dim view of the Secretary of State going abroad, selling our industry short, giving the impression that North sea oil and gas has only about 20 years to run and that our fields are running out. We know that we have considerable potential and a long-term development industry which is not helped by the Secretary of State for Energy implying that it will run out in less than a generation. We know that that is not true.

One point that the Secretary of State omitted when he was throwing about general comments on the Opposition parties was the recent volte face of the Government on the issue of nuclear waste disposal and the exploration for nuclear waste disposal sites. It is fair to say that there is proper and genuine concern on both sides of the House about the problem of nuclear waste. Regardless of whether we develop nuclear power or phase it out, it is a problem that we shall have to address. That point must be acknowledged.

The Government have been panicked by some senior, and some not so senior, Tory Members of Parliament because of the sheer hostility that the dumping proposals have engendered in their constituencies. The Government have now put up a spurious argument for cancelling the proposals on the ground that they were not economically proven. I visited one of those sites at Elstow and as a complete layman I was appalled that anyone could be seriously suggesting that nuclear waste could be disposed of on a site which had a water table less than 6ft below the ground. We are justified in being cynical about the Government's attitude in that sector. I accept that it is a problem that we will have to return to collectively and preferably with all-party support. The answer must be deep disposal in safe sites, and, if I can make a Scottish plea, we do not want it on Scottish islands because I can assure the Government that the opposition and hostility to that will be very strong.

I turn to the substance of the debate, the case for Sizewell. The Secretary of State omitted to mention whether Sizewell was to be the first of a generation or was to be one power station in isolation. Other parts of the country would like to know whether the Government would take the recommendation of the Layfield report and regard Sizewell as a prototype and withhold any further developments until it has been proved or whether they will steamroller further developments.

Sizewell's contribution to our overall energy requirement is small one way or the other and no one can suggest that it is an urgent necessity with regard to supply. The CEGB has shown its concern by ordering coal-fired power stations which it knows it can deliver on time and to a certain cost and specification, which is not yet proven to be the case for Sizewell.

The economic arguments for Sizewell, even at the time of the publication of the Layfield report, were less than convincing. My party's "hostility", to use the Secretary of State's word, to nuclear power has been substantially based on our complete lack of conviction about the economic arguments. It has not produced the cheap electricity that was promised. That has not been the experience of France or other countries. On the contrary, it has often been more expensive than forecast because of delays and overruns. The economic arguments have changed substantially as the price of alternative sources of fuel have fallen, and, given that it was a finely balanced judgment based mostly on subjective figures from the CEGB, there is every reason to deduce that Sizewell is not economic.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for clarifying that the reason for the Liberal party's hostility to nuclear power was basically an economic one. How does he reconcile that with the motion that was passed at the SDP conference which said:-

"Subject to a satisfactory outcome of this review we will construct additional nuclear power stations, if and when required".

Mr. Bruce: That is exactly the point. "If and when required" assumes that the economic and safety arguments add up. In the present circumstances neither of them does. That is a perfectly reasonable position to take and is one that the British public would find perfectly acceptable. The argument is quite simple. If it is safe and economic by all means build them, as the Government are doing, but the economics are extremely questionable and safety still remains a matter of concern. We must bear in mind that Sir Frank Layfield did not give Sizewell a clean bill of health on safety grounds. Indeed, he qualified it substantially on safety grounds.

The general thrust of the nuclear industry in the United Kingdom post-Chernobyl has simply been to say that it could not happen here. There has been no review of the evacuation radius of nuclear power stations and no indication that the Government have any idea how to deal with an accident if it happened. The arguments simply seems to be, "We do not need to do that because it could not happen here." That is what the Russians thought, and look what happened to them.

Dr. Michael Clark (Rochford): The Liberal party's policy seems to be to build nuclear power stations if and when desired. Will the hon. Gentleman tell us how soon before they are desired he would contemplate building them?

Mr. Bruce: I am coming to that. If the hon. Gentleman listens to the rest of my speech he will realise that our view is that there are a considerable variety of alternative options which are likely to bear fruit. There are certainly no pressures on us in the present circumstances to build nuclear power stations in the future, if at all. We have consistently expressed that view.

We believe that the potential for energy saving through conservation is substantial. The Government have endorsed that by producing their own figures but they have failed to come up with a policy that is likely to achieve it. It has been generally accepted, especially in the United States where commercial considerations on power generation are sharper than here, that the best return on investment in the energy and electricity industry is in conservation. One gets a better return for one's dollars or pounds by putting the money into conservation rather than power stations.

I asked the Secretary of State when he announced the go-ahead for Sizewell—he never answered this question —whether he had any idea how much energy could be saved by an investment that was equivalent to the cost of Sizewell. He could not answer that, but the calculations that have been done in the United States suggest that it would be substantially more than the amount of electricity that Sizewell will generate. It would also create a considerable amount of employment in the process and would be more job efficient as well as more energy efficient. That is something which, sadly, the Government have overlooked. They have cut back on matters such as the homes insulation programme and in sectors where a greater degree of comfort as well as efficiency could have been achieved. I often find when I talk to visitors, especially from Scandinavia and some of the other north European countries, that they are amazed when I talk about our problems of black mould, condensation and dripping walls in houses. That is not something that they experience because they design and insulate their houses properly, and thus they can then afford to heat them adequately.

The other course that we believe has more potential —I hasten to add that experience elsewhere suggests that it would be secondary to the return that one can get from energy efficiency — is the development of alternative renewable energy sources. The Secretary of State has made great play of the fact that he is spending on alternatives some fanciful amount which is far more than anybody else. However, it is still a derisory sum and it is still mostly being spent on research when we are ready to implement a number of alternative energy factors. The particular alternative on which I would be interested to hear a reply, especially if the Secretary of State for Scotland is replying to the debate, is the role of wind energy. I understand that a number of prototype developments in Scotland have proved remarkably successful. The British Wind Energy Association makes the extravagant claim—I report it to the House as such —that we could produce all the energy that we need in Britain more cheaply through wind power than from any other source. I do not necessarily accept that claim, but if I were Secretary of State for Energy I should spend a good deal of time investigating it because if the figures are valid they offer considerable potential. As the Secretary of State for Scotland knows, one of the great pioneers of wind turbines is James Howden of Glasgow, the company having had the opportunity to develop them on the backs of CEGB and hydro board research projects and having secured export orders from California, where such schemes are going ahead due to changes in the tax regime.

[Mr. Bruce]

I shall not go through all the other alternatives as they are well known. Too often, like is not compared with like. For instance, energy conservation investment is expected to prove itself by normal commercial rate of return while investment in energy generation is required to produce only a 5 per cent. rate of return. If they were put on an equal footing, there would be a massive change in circumstances. I hope that the Secretary of State for Scotland will confirm that such a move should be encouraged.

Sir Frank Layfield also referred to the lack of implementation of combined heat and power schemes in the United Kingdom compared with other countries. To be effective, this requires a move away from massive generating capacity to small and medium-sized units, developed on a co-operative basis between electricity utilities and other enterprises and sited close to built-up areas. Nuclear power stations are too big and, by definition, sited a long way from anywhere, so such efficiency cannot be achieved on any significant scale. That being so, it seems that we have closed our minds against a substantial energy benefit which could be achieved and on which this country is lagging far behind.

Throughout the life of this and the previous Parliament, the Government have shown an excessively political approach to energy. The Secretary of State has boasted that it is his policy not to have an energy policy, implying that the market will solve the question. The greatest enthusiasts for nuclear power are on the Conservative side, although nuclear power is the one area in which the market does not operate. To the extent that a market operates at all, nuclear energy does not obtain funding because nobody wants to take the risk. We have seen a mish-mash of unco-ordinated, incoherent policies, and I do not take it kindly when the Secretary of State for Energy comes to the House in an excitable state, as he did today, and lectures us about energy policy when he has a record of failure to grasp opportunities which could provide far more jobs and export opportunities throughout the country rather than in a few isolated patches than any policy that the Government have put forward.

The Government have totally and abysmally failed to make a case for Sizewell. Nothing that they have said today changes the argument and we remain completely unconvinced.

8.23 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): The hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) must have a painful posterior from sitting on so many fences and trying to cover the gap between Liberal and SDP policy on nuclear energy. It seems odd for him to say that nuclear power stations should be built if they are economic and safe as Liberal policy seems to be to close them down whether or not they are safe and economic. The hon. Gentleman was also out of touch with regard to emergency plans. He should know that the BNFL installations have extremely up-to-date emergency plans which I am sure have been approved by the Government, although I am convinced that they will never need to be put into operation. As the hon. Gentleman spent so much of his speech talking about conservation, I was surprised that he did not mention the £179 million announced by the Government last week to reduce the likelihood of acid rain from coal-fired stations.

I am glad that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland is to wind up the debate as nuclear power is important in Scotland. He can take credit, as can the whole of Scotland, for the developments at Dounreay and Hunterston, operating at very high levels of safety, and also Torness in the future. The Government dealt very effectively with the emergency last year and all farmers welcomed the steps taken by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to help them with the problems that arose.

I appreciate the importance of the Sizewell decision and I entirely support the Government, having looked carefully at the Layfield report which agreed that it should go ahead. I wish to refer to Chapelcross in my constituency. This was the second Magnox reactor and it has been on stream since 1960 producing 190 MW. It is highly efficient—98 per cent. on load and 86 per cent. even including shutdown periods. That is world class efficiency and the reactors are in great shape. The power goes to the South of Scotland Electricity Board and the plant is regularly checked by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and the Health and Safety Executive. The safety record is exceptional, as it should be, and tribute should be paid to the superintendent and his staff.

In responding to my intervention, the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) inadvertently misled the House as the two Magnox reactors and Calder Hall and Chapelcross are not being decommissioned. An old test AGR reactor at the Windscale-Sellafield site is being decommissioned, but that has nothing to do with the other two Magnox stations which are producing electricity. The right hon. Gentleman was thus quite wrong to imply that there was any concern about the safety of either station.

Mr. Barron: That is not surprising as no one has been able to produce an up-to-date report on the safety of those stations. That has been going on for years.

Sir Hector Monro: As usual, the hon. Gentleman contributes nothing to the debate. He has been intervening all evening without saying anything sensible.

With no new major power station scheduled to be completed for eight years or so, it is incredible that the Opposition should be talking about running down the industry. France has 70 per cent. nuclear power and Belgium 67 per cent. Sweden, which takes great interest in environmental matters, has 50 per cent. This country has only 19 per cent. Yet the Opposition say that that is too much.

Some experts have referred to the Magnox stations as having a design life of 20 to 30 years, but I believe that that is a matter of accountancy rather than safety. As we approach the election, however, it is an important issue because it is Labour party policy to run down both stations soon and the whole industry over a period with the loss of perhaps 100,000 jobs, not to mention the rise in electricity costs that would result. The Liberal party takes the same view while the SDP sits on the fence. The Scottish National party is against nuclear power, but for electoral reasons it has a different policy for each constituency and is prepared to let Chapelcross continue because that suits the SNP candidate there.

There is no case for a rundown for safety reasons. If the power is required — and on every United Kingdom analysis it is required—there should be no question of closure provided that the safety standards are met and maintained. Labour Members and others try to curry votes by talking of opening the Canonbie coalfield, and believe that in some incredible way the 650 highly qualified workers at Chapelcross nuclear power station will suddenly become underground workers in a deep mine. That, of course, is absolute nonsense. I checked on the Canonbie coalfield, and the chairman of British Coal, Sir Robert Haslam, tells me that it is a deep mine, that it does not figure in British Coal plans and is only a distant possibility. Deep mines are expensive and environmentally contentious. The mine would certainly not bring work to local people. My hon. Friend the Minister responsible for coal matters confirms these points, as does the Minister responsible for Energy, who says that there is no likelihood of a tidal power barrage on the Solway Firth or of any harnessing of wind power in that area. In short, the energy supplies for that area can come only from Chapelcross.

Mr. Alexander Eadie (Midlothian): The hon. Gentleman talked about Canonbie. Will he try to get the facts about it right? It is probably the largest unproved coalfield in Scotland—it is not only a mine. It stretches from Lesmahagow to Cumbria.

Sir Hector Monro: I took the trouble to get the chairman of British Coal to give me the facts. He assured me that it was a deep mine which is not in British Coal's present plans. There is no likelihood this century of any development whatever there.

Of course, Opposition Members tend to forget the social aspects of decommissioning nuclear power stations with 650 workers in an area of high unemployment. That would be catastrophic to the community, and the local authority would lose £600,000 in rates. Has my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State been able to give any thought —with his colleagues in the Department of Energy—to the possibility of the dry buffer store that has been raised by the CEGB, and to whether or not that might be built at Chapelcross, or Heysham, or at any other site in the United Kingdom.

Two major decisions are needed: is the store needed at all—one has to bear in mind its high capital cost—and on what site would it be built? Thereafter, one would have to have intense discussions with the local authority about planning, and with the community about its acceptability. Can the Secretary of State give me any indication of when those decisions will be made?

I am pleased that British Nuclear Fuels has appointed a director of the reactor division to work with the superintendents on developments at the Magnox reactor stations. If my right hon. Friend has any information about future developments, it would be welcome.

Finally, will my right hon. Friend respond to the point about nuclear waste in Scotland, because the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) and other Opposition Members have been trying to cause difficulties by saying that we shall reopen the burial of nuclear waste at Mulwarchar, in Galloway, and in the Scottish islands and elsewhere? I do not believe for one moment that any of that is true, and it is wrong to raise concern where none exists. If my right hon. Friend could say a little about the future of waste disposal possibilities in Scotland, that would be welcomed in Scotland.

I am glad that the Government have supported the nuclear industry in the way that they have, and have insisted on the highest standards of safety in the environment. I am sure that the motion to approve Sizewell B and the general policy for nuclear power is the right one.

8.34 pm

Mr. Jack Thompson (Wansbeck): I wish to make four declarations of interest: I am a sponsored miners' MP; I am a sponsor of the Druridge association, which is campaigning against the building of a nuclear power station in that area; and, more importantly, I am a human being; and a British citizen. Those are all good reasons for opposing Sizewell B.

It is appropriate that the debate is taking place on the day on which the general election has been announced, because it highlights the issue of the development of nuclear power in this country. In my constituency the issue will be in the forefront of the campaign for the next four weeks, alongside unemployment, education and social benefits—and it has been so for the last eight or nine years.

Although the Government have made up their minds about building the first PWR in Britain in Sizewell, today's debate is an exercise in trying once again to convince public opinion that the economics and the environmental and safety aspects of nuclear power generation, and especially the introduction of PWR, are wholly beneficial to the nation and will not require a Government health warning on the side of the packet saying that this form of energy is dangerous and can damage one's health.

The Government have said nothing in this or previous debates to convince millions of people in the country that all is sweetness and light. The Government say that, standing next to Sizewell A, which is a Magnox station, Sizewell B will become profitable with regard to capital and revenue costs. It is of course an ugly feature on the Sizewell coastline, but the people in that area can rest in their beds satisfied that they will not suffer in any way from accidents at a nuclear power station.

To be economically viable Sizewell B will be a gamble. Since the inquiry ended, the odds have shortened considerably. Volatile oil prices affect the fuel economy of the world and prices now are well below those quoted during the inquiry. There has been a complete change in the coal industry, internationally and in Britain. There has been a major breakthrough with the introduction of new equipment to British mines, and output levels, as the Secretary of State constantly reminds us, are breaking records almost weekly. New technology in coal burning and pollution control has altered the prospects for PWR development in the past two years. It is now possible to make a more positive prediction about future coal-burning generation. Sir Frank Layfield has said that the figures quoted by the CEGB in the inquiry were much too high, confused, insufficient and skilfully uncertain. The British Coal forecast, made during its presentation at the inquiry, suggested that world coal prices would be about $75 a tonne. It has now changed its forecast to suggest that coal prices in the year 2000 will now be $40 a tonne. That affects the thinking on Sizewell.

The CEGB now admits that the capital costs have increased between £60 million and £100 million and further increases are anticipated. None of the board's nuclear stations has yet operated as cheaply as coal

[Mr. Jack Thompson]

stations. Capital costs for Sizewell have increased dramatically and they are forecast to increase further before it is built. The huge costs of decommissioning have not yet been identified and the recent announcement of the abandoning of the four sites for depositing low-level nuclear waste because of political and public pressure, or a combination of the two, shows the insurmountable problems that are facing all forms of nuclear waste disposal. The other sites that were identified were for low-level waste, and the problems and the public outcry accompanying high-level nuclear waste will be even greater.

The effect upon the environment is another issue that has become increasingly predominant in the minds of individuals. I had the opportunity to visit the Sizewell A station at about the time of the proposal or announcement to build the B station. That was when the PWR design was introduced.

I recall my first sight of the A station. I was a stranger in the area and I saw it as such. I saw the station from the National Trust car park—I noted this at the time, and I still have it on record—at Dunwich common. That is close to the Minsmere nature reserve, which is two miles north of the power station. The coastal area between the common and the station is open and the main buildings are conspicuous. There is only a low sand dune formation along the beach. Although attempts have been made superficially to screen the site, they have not been very effective. The military style security fence around the site is not an attractive feature.

The proposed B station would be built to the north of the existing station, and according to the CEGB's figures it would probably be longer and wider. It would certainly be higher than the existing building. It would create an even more significant blot on the landscape than the present station.

There will probably be changes in the nature of the sea as such changes have already been identified in other areas where there are huge power stations. A tremendous amount of water has to be taken from the sea, which passes through the station for cooling purposes. It is then returned to the sea at a somewhat higher temperature. There are coal-fired power stations at the north and south ends of my constituency and it seems that changes in the life of the sea have been substantial, although there has been less of a change in the temperature of the water.

There are major doubts about safety. When the Sizewell inquiry was opened, serious doubts were expressed about the safety of nuclear power throughout the world, and especially in countries such as Sweden. The figures quoted by the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) suggest that 50 per cent. of Sweden's electricity is still generated by nuclear power, but different figures were given to me while I was in Sweden. Public alarm in Holland, West Germany and the United States has triggered off a serious examination of potential disasters as a result of nuclear accidents. Design faults and human error have been blamed, and it has been claimed that these problems can be overcome. Arguments have been presented for and against future development, and the Sizewell inquiry completed its work before the Chernobyl accident took place. When the world learned of that incident, design fault and human error were again attributed.

The CEGB defended its case for Sizewell by saying that the Chernobyl disaster could not happen in Britain. Before I came to this place I spent much of my life as an engineer. I have the greatest respect for engineers throughout the world, especially in Britain, but no engineer is infallible. Every one of us is susceptible to human error. I made my mistakes in my time and others will make theirs. That will apply whether the engineer is on a ship, in a nuclear power station, in a mine or anywhere else. There are those who claim that we are more expert than anyone else in the world in designing power stations and that our operators are better than anyone else in the world, but I do not think that a British engineer would ever make those claims.

Other European countries have shown more sense than we have, along with the CEGB. Sweden is increasingly determined to reduce its commitment to nuclear power stations and Austria has dismantled its one unused station. Italy, Holland and Spain are mothballing their stations. As the Secretary of State has said, West Germany is trying to push ahead with a nuclear programme, but one that is being opposed strongly by state Parliaments. Denmark, Greece, Portugal, Luxembourg and Ireland have no nuclear plans, and in the United States nuclear station orders have been cancelled.

It is evident that the Government's policy on nuclear power development is a political response to the miners. It seems that they are unaware that the real power lies with the electrical generating industry. The one group of workers that is far more powerful than the miners or those in the oil and gas industries comprises those who are employed in the power industry. Is it suggested by the Government that power industry employees will never take industrial action, will not have strikes and will not engage in any industrial disputes? Are they saying that they will not close down power stations? That will be the position only if the workers in the power industry are the elitist blue-collar workers, and it seems that that might be the Government's objective. Perhaps there will be this elitist group of workers, for we know that the workers in the power industry could close down our power stations almost immediately. They could bring the country to a standstill overnight, if not within 10 minutes.

It might seem that my comments about a rural part of Suffolk are not relevant to my constituency. However, I have a deep interest in energy matters and the Sizewell proposals are reflected in the board's proposal to build a nuclear power station in the constituency which adjoins mine, which is represented by the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), who is in his place. The proposed station would be close to my constituency, and that is an important interest. The Sizewell proposals are the proposals for the power station at Druridge bay, and I know that the attitude of the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed to the proposed station is similar to mine. He and I will continue the battle with almost everyone else in the north-east to ensure that a power station is not built at that site. There are positive counter-proposals that have the almost total support of the people in the region. A coal-fired station could be built on the existing site in Blyth at a place called Cambois, or the existing stations could be refurbished. If the Government wish to give the hon. Gentleman and myself something with which to win our seats, they should bear in mind that they have already given us the Sizewell inquiry.

8.48 pm

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): If the hon. Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Thompson) does not want a power station to be in the north-east, I can assure him that there are many employed in the nuclear industry in the north-west who would be delighted to have it. As I have the great honour to be a constituent of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, and as we are both north-west Members, I think that it would be right for me to draw to the attention of the House the great importance to the north-west of the nuclear industry. Within 20 miles of the centre of my constituency about 10,000 people are employed by British Nuclear Fuels plc. The National Nuclear Corporation has its headquarters in my constituency. As a result of the Government's decision to license the new station at Sizewell, several hundred new jobs have come to Knutsford already.

As we enter the election campaign, the general election having been announced today, the Conservative party is the only party that is clearly in favour of an advance in nuclear power. It is in favour of expanding our nuclear power programme. In spite of tergiversations of the various sectors of the alliance and the attempt of candidates in constituencies where nuclear votes are to be won to deny what their parties actually stand for, it is only the Conservative party that promises an expansion of jobs in the nuclear industry, with all the cost-cutting in energy prices that that promises for the rest of British industry.

The Labour party's policy is clear and it has been outlined by the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme). It proposes that no new stations should be built, and it proposes also not to fuel the Heysham and Torness stations when they are finished. In short, it proposes to eradicate the nuclear power industry in Britain. The only Opposition Members who take a different view are the hon. Members for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) and for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham), and for obvious reasons.

I was interested to hear what the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) said about the so-called policy of the alliance. He said that the alliance was united on this issue. That is interesting when one considers that the Liberal party has a long history of opposition to nuclear power. In 1979 the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), the leader of the Liberal party, said that we must

> "halt the dangerous and unbelievably costly expansion of the nuclear industry."

That was a policy platform endorsed at the Liberal party assembly last September when the Liberals voted to halt the commissioning of future nuclear installations and to commence a planned phasing out of all nuclear power. There was nothing there about safety review or any ifs and buts. However, in 1981, in Warrington, the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) said:

> "The SDP supports an on-going nuclear power programme as being necessary for the future of the country."

I do not know whether that ringing declaration in favour of nuclear power had anything to do with the fact that British Nuclear Fuels employs several thousand people in Warrington and that, at that time, there was a by-election in Warrington in which the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) was the SDP candidate. It would be base of me to suggest that the alliance was attempting to play any such crude, electoral calculating advantage.

It is clear that the SDP would like to be able to support the nuclear programme—presumably that is why none of its representatives has been here for the entire debate. However, the sandal wearers, nut cutlet eaters and beardy weirdies who inhabit the Liberal assembly will not accept such an idea. Therefore, the alliance has had to cobble together a curious compromise whereby, subject to a safety review, the SDP says it would commit itself to building new nuclear power stations. The Liberal party is prepared to go along with that for the time being because, by so doing, it will be able to gull the electorate into believing that no decisions have been taken. Therefore, the Liberals can say what they like in any constituency to suit that constituency.

If there is a genuine doubt about the safety of nuclear power stations, they should be shut down, if only on a temporary basis. One could never justify the country running the type of risks that have arisen as a result of the Chernobyl disaster. If such a disaster is thought conceivable in Britain, I do not understand why we should wait for the results of a safety review before taking the necessary steps to prevent it. It would not have to be thought likely but merely conceivable that such an accident could occur. The fact that the alliance policy hinges on such a safety review demonstrates, as dramatically as possible, that the alliance is trying to pull a cynical electoral trick to seek some temporary advantage in the coming election.

The truth of the matter is that, if we are alive to the future energy problems not only of the country but of the world, and if we wish to capitalise on what will, undoubtedly, be the way forward for future energy production we must develop the nuclear industry and take advantage of the expertise that will be developed. The 21st century will be the century in which the finite known energy reserves of fossil fuels will run out, whether they are oil, gas or coal. That is inescapable. We will be faced with the problem of what to do when fossil fuels run out. If energy demands continue to expand at their present rate, we will certainly face that problem within the next 100 years.

The Government are committed to alternative energy supplies. They have poured millions of pounds into the study and will continue to do so. However, such projects will produce only a partial solution to the problem. Such projects will supply only part of the increased demand for energy. Certainly they will do nothing towards replacing the existing 20 per cent. of energy needs that is supplied by the nuclear industry.

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): If we were foolish enough to go ahead with the much-vaunted Severn barrage, given the doubts about the project, it would produce the equivalent of less than one year's electricity, given the current increase in demand. That underlines my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Hamilton: My hon. Friend is perfectly correct. If there was a Mersey barrage or a Dee barrage as well as a Severn barrage, it would produce only the equivalent of 5 per cent. of the increased demand for energy that will arise between now and the end of the century. At best such projects represent minor elements in our calculations.

A vast market for nuclear services is developing abroad. If 25 per cent. of the world's electricity is nuclear generated by the year 2050, the market for fuel services will amount

[Mr. Hamilton]

to £25 billion per annum. There will also be capital investment of £20 billion per annum. Britain is in the forefront of the nuclear industry and, on the assumption that, under Conservative Governments, we will continue to maintain our lead, we will be in a perfect postion to take advantage of the opportunities.

I welcome the support the Government have given to the nuclear industry and the lease of life that has been given to the industry by the licensing of the new Sizewell reactor. I reiterate that it is the Conservative party alone that will continue the advancement of nuclear power upon which the future prosperity of the country depends.

8.45 pm

Mr. Michael McGuire (Makerfield): On two previous occasions I said that it was probably the last time I would address the House. Today I am on surer ground and I believe that this will be the last time that I will address the House. This is Custer's last stand and everybody knows what happened to Custer.

I am delighted to take part in this debate because we can appreciate the political messages coming across. The lads behind me, the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) and his hon. Friends, will get some flak. My hon. Friend the Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Thompson) will also receive such treatment. When my hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) gives the Opposition reply to this debate he will give his usual ebullient speech, which will convince everyone except the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton). He is a dyed-in-the-wool nuclear reactor man. He believes that everyone should have one in their house and, if he could provide them, he would do just that.

In a previous debate on this matter I described the people who advocate nuclear power by using the analogy of a card game when one man tries to kid his opponents. Today I will give the analogy of the man trying to sell gold bricks on Waterloo bridge. He says to a chap, "You can have this gold brick. It is the biggest bargain of your lifetime and you can have it for £100." The fellow shows some doubt, so the man says, "As it's you, you can have two for £100."

There have been four ages in the nuclear debate. The first was the age of innocent expectations and that occurred between 1946 to 1966. I remind the House that one of my late colleagues, Fred Lee, when he was Minister of Power in 1964, swallowed the argument, like all those before him, that nuclear power would be so cheap and so profitable that it would not be sensible to monitor it nor meter it. He believed that people should get it for nothing. We know that that idea soon went.

The second age was the age of doubt, and that lasted from 1967 to 1974. We have had two further ages. The first of those was the age of anguish that occurred between 1975 and 1980. The nuclear advocates were saved by the tremendous increase in oil prices and coal prices and they were able to capitalise on those increases.

We are now coming to the last stage—the age of justification, from 1981 to the present. Why do we have such concern? Why is there disaffection? Why are people worried? They are worried because there have been sufficient signs to justify worrying about nuclear power. Chernobyl happened one month after the Layfield committee finished taking evidence. It is staggering that there is no mention of Chernobyl in the report. We must not allow Government supporters or anybody else to get carried away. When he had heard all the arguments, Layfield said that the Sizewell station justified itself provided it could be built to time and cost. That has not happened. The Magnox programme overran by several years and about £900 million. It has not been proven. We cannot say that, given what happened, it can be justified. It has not been justified.

We know that, many years ago, Sir Arthur Hawkins, a previous chairman of the CEGB, was PWR-mad when he appeared before Select Committees. He wanted to build 15 of them. We must remember that Sizewell B is a prototype. The Government have said that they will build replicas. People say that Chernobyl was different. What about Three Mile Island? That is a PWR station and is still contaminated. The principle is not sound. Some people say that we shall be the poor man of Europe, that we are isolated, and that we shall choose energy sources that will impoverish people. That is a lot of bunkum. I am glad that the Secretary of State for Scotland is present. He intervened earlier and tried to get a Scottish point of view across. I shall refer later to the difference between the SSEB and the CEGB. It is important.

The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) mentioned Sweden. He said that the Swedes are superkeen on environmental matters and that 50 per cent. of their energy is nuclear. The hon. Gentleman should bring himself up to date. They are committed to phasing it out. The hon. Member for Tatton, with all his wisdom, told us that gas, coal and so on are finite and that supplies will finish fairly soon. There was a newspaper report that an English scientist, of all people, who has always had a theory about how gas and oil were created, did not go along with the dead fish concept. He believes that there is something deeper. We cannot believe everything that we read in the papers. If we did, we would believe that the Tories are a lot further in front of us than they are—*[Interruption.]* The House considered the matter in 1970. Government Members should not count their chickens before they are hatched. The public can be fickle. Thank God for fickleness; they might swap over.

The scientist whom I mentioned said that oil supplies would satisfy world requirements far into the distant future. Oil is a fossil fuel. The hon. Member for Tatton said that such resources are finite. The English professor has done some deep drilling in Sweden and has come up with what looks like a winner.

We have an international picture. Grave doubt has been expressed. No new stations are being ordered in America, the land from which we get nuclear technology. They are completing one or two that are too far advanced to stop, but they will not build any more. Every country with any sense is learning the lessons of Chernobyl and Three Mile Island. They have said that the next time could be worse. We should learn that lesson, too.

The South of Scotland Electricity Board put forward a strong case. It said that an AGR programme is better, that it would be better to sustain it, and that the cost saving would be several hundred million pounds. The SSEB believes that the system is proven and that the CEGB would be better going down that road. It opposes the PWR system. I have referred several times to Chernobyl and have said that it staggered me that it was not mentioned in the Layfield report. Chernobyl has changed people's views on the matter. Before Chernobyl, *The Economist* stated:

> "Nuclear power is as safe as a chocolate factory."

After Chernobyl, it stated:

> "Chernobyl has convinced many people, and not just what we describe as greens, that nuclear power is too dangerous at any price."

The European Commissioner for Energy said:

> "It is very difficult to plan long term after Chernobyl."

I have described the change in the European scene. The Danes have asked the Swedes to close down a nuclear plant 12 miles across the Baltic from their territories. The Italians have pledged a period of careful reflection following Chernobyl. France is held up to us as the country that we should try to copy and it is said that we should try to get our energy production from nuclear sources up to that of France. France is in an economic shambles and its debt-ridden economy resembles that of a Third world country. It has debts of over £20 billion. That is why France wants to flog power stations to anybody who will take them. The French Government, unlike us, have a system where they can ride roughshod over public opinion. In France, public opinion would not delay a similar discussion for this length of time. In France the Government get their way. If we want a Third world economy we should go down the French road, as we will finish up with £20 billion of debt, quite apart from whether the station is safe or not.

The economics of the argument have not been made out by any measuring stick. There are disagreements between sectors of the electricity supply industry. The SSEB argument cannot be discounted as some sort of small-time rivalry. It is a very serious argument.

I began by saying that this may be the last time on which I address the House. I can say with some conviction that that is a certainty. All through the four ages that I outlined we have been sold a pup. The case for nuclear power has not been made out economically or safely. The PWRs at Three Mile Island and at Chernobyl cannot be laughed off as not being quite as good as ours. The Government should listen to the voices that are saying, "Re-examine the arguments". I mentioned before the arguments about coal. As soon as the report I mentioned previously was written it was almost out of date because of forecasted coal prices. The bedrock of the argument is that Sizewell could only be justified if it was built on time and to cost. No nuclear power station in this country has yet achieved that. They have all overrun, sometimes grotesquely. The cost has been enormous. The hon. Member for Gordon mentioned alternative sources and energy conservation. When about £10 million is given to energy conservation as opposed to about £256 million for research into nuclear power one should not expect credible comparisons. One will be emphasised more than the other and it is not fair play. The savings are enormous and I believe that people would be gratified, willing to listen, and delighted to hear the Government say that they will have another look at Sizewell.

9.7 pm

Dr. Michael Clark (Rochford): I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McGuire). I am sorry that that was his last speech in the House. I am sure that he is leaving just when he has reached his own age of justification and that he will be replaced in due course by someone from his constituency in his age of innocent expectation. We bid him farewell if that was his last speech.

Tonight I should like to speak about the views that people have about nuclear energy and nuclear generated electricity. Not much thought is given to electricity generation in general. People do not wish to understand how turbines or generators work as long as they work and electricity goes into their households. As soon as the electricity is generated from a nuclear source, many people take an interest and quite a few appear to become experts. I wonder why nuclear power has that effect on people. Perhaps it is because nuclear power is rightly conceived as complex and is little understood by laymen. Those who understand it may well think that it is wrong and risky to change the nature of the atom. The fact that the nature of the atom is being changed all the time on the sun, which gives us our energy through nuclear fusion, is generally ignored. It may be that nuclear power has a special place in people's minds because of the nature of the risk and the difficulty in defining that risk.

To a greater or lesser extent, everyone accepts risks in crossing the road, working with machinery or flying off on holiday, but in nearly every case the risk can be quantified in terms of possible damage and the extent of the damage. Nuclear risk is not perceived in that way, and is generally thought not to be quantifiable. That is not so. We can quantify nuclear risks and in doing so we should also quantify the risk of not having nuclear power and what effect that would have on the economy and the life of this country.

Human casualties caused by nuclear accidents like the recent one at Chernobyl arouse great emotion, probably because in people's minds there is a link between nuclear power, nuclear warfare and nuclear bombs. The enrichment of the fuel in a bomb and in a nuclear power station is brought about in wholly different ways and there is a complete difference in basic engineering. Those facts are not generally understood or acknowledged. When Chernobyl went up just over a year ago, a bomb was created. First, there was a steam explosion and thereafter an explosion caused by the release of hydrogen. However, that was a conventional explosion and there was no mushroom cloud to prove otherwise.

We have to look at the extent of Government involvement in nuclear energy and wonder whether that is one reason why the population at large treat nuclear energy as something special. The high capital cost of nuclear installations, the special planning inquiries, the safety scrutiny and the disposal of radioactive waste mean that Governments have to take an interest in nuclear matters. Some people say that, because the fuel could be diverted to military programmes or hijacked by terrorists, it is essential that Governments take an interest.

Unfortunately, the more interest a Government take in nuclear power, the more special it appears to become, and that interest is perceived by many as a sign of control and even as a sign of preference. Governments then tend to play down their nuclear power programmes and begin to show a reticence about propagating the virtues of nuclear power. The exception is France, where a massive nuclear programme is proudly and openly proclaimed and generally accepted by the public. On the one hand, Government are seen to be protecting nuclear power. As all Governments are almost, by definition, of the Establishment, and as anti-nuclear groups seem to get linked with Left-wing organisations, nuclear power has,

[Dr. Michael Clark]

unfortunately, become a political issue. I say "unfortunately" because I should prefer to see nuclear power viewed not as a political issue, but as an educational issue and an environmental challenge.

By their very training, scientists are taught to reveal the truth and have a high reputation. However, from time to time it seems that nuclear scientists have lost that reputation and are mistrusted by the public at large. One must ask why that is so. Is it because those scientists are not educating the public sufficiently well in nuclear matters, or is it because nuclear scientists are getting too closely involved with politicians and the politicians are tainting the scientists, thus giving rise to a lack of trust?

Nuclear matters are matters of national pride, rather like state airlines. To have a nuclear power station or a nuclear programme is a status symbol of maturity and wealth. Even Governments in developing countries have nuclear research programmes and nuclear generating programmes. Some even carry out work on designing and modifying reactors. The more developed countries compete with each other to introduce refinements to their nuclear reactors so that they can sell them at home and abroad. Nuclear engineering then becomes just another international business operated by a whole series of multinational companies. Many people see the multinationalism of nuclear power as more important than international safety. I have some sympathy with that view.

We all know that, as has already been said, the Chernobyl design was thought to be faulty by Western experts many years ago. Why did not those experts shout louder and longer if they thought that Chernobyl was unsafe? Had they done so, it is perhaps unlikely that the RBMK-type reactor would have been decommissioned by the Russians, but it is highly likely that they would not have dared to carry out the experiments which led a year ago to that disastrous explosion.

Do the experts who kept quiet in years gone by have reservations about other nuclear power stations, in their own countries or abroad? If so, they should reveal those doubts, now. Should there be another incident like Chernobyl—God forbid—it will be no use their crying out after the incident "Yes, we knew that it was not safe; we would not have had one in this country." They must cry out now if they feel that any power station anywhere in the world is intrinsically unsafe. More international co-operation, particularly with regard to safety and the interchange of information, is perceived as necessary by individuals worrying about nuclear issues.

I also ask whether the nuclear industry in this country has portrayed a sufficient image of confidence in itself. We were confident up to 1956. That was the age of innocent expectation referred to by the hon. Member for Makerfield. We built a series of Magnox power stations. Then we entered an era of technical confusion, with steam-generating heavy water reactors, AGRs, and now the PWR proposed for Sizewell. Does the nuclear industry not realise that the more uniformity of view and consistency of approach it has within itself, the more it will project an image of self-confidence and the more that self-confidence will help people in the country at large to accept its decisions, and to accept more readily a power station at Sizewell?

Once again, France has got it right. It has a programme of power stations which has not gone in fits and starts. It has stuck with one design. In France, nuclear power is no longer a technical novelty; it is merely a way of generating electricity to boil a kettle or light a room, and it is even a way of earning exchange from this country.

Before the accident at Chernobyl, the nuclear industry could proudly claim that it had nearly 4,000 reactor years of safe experience worldwide. That is no longer so. The accident that the "antis" feared has happened. The pro-nuclear people, realising that they could not prove a negative, argued using astronomical odds that an accident would never happen. Unfortunately, it did happen, and it is very difficult now for the pro-nuclear people to go back to arguing on probability.

There is no escaping the seriousness of the Chernobyl accident. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Blackpool, North (Mr. Miscampbell) mentioned deaths on the roads, and said that the number of such deaths between now and next week would be about 100, compared with the 30 people killed at Chernobyl. However, the accidents are not strictly comparable. The magnitude of the Chernobyl disaster cannot be compared with road accidents over a week in a Western country.

It is ironic that, as the risks of nuclear war appear to diminish, the public see the risks in civil nuclear power increasing. What can the Government and the nuclear industry do to reduce that worry? First, there should be a greater awareness of radiation in general. Do the public know the strength of background radiation — for instance, radiation from rocks in Cornwall or Aberdeen? Do they know that the radiation received by the average citizen in this country as a result of Chernobyl was no more than the radiation received by any of us during a chest X-ray?

Next, I wonder whether the modern scientists could get their units in order so that old scientists like me and, I hope, the general public can begin to learn something about radiation. There is no chance of them learning much about radiation with rads, rems, roentgens, sieverts, and becquerels that very few of us understand. Communication techniques need to be improved. At the time of the Chernobyl disaster I heard a National Radiological Protection Board spokesman constantly repeat that the accident was not the end of the world, but the more he said it the less reassuring he became.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food did a splendid job in protecting the health of this nation by adhering to very strict and even over-cautious rules regarding food, including vegetables. It took away the practical fear of the population, but unfortunately all that the scientists continued to do was to talk about rems and rads and positive void coefficients. That did not help at all.

If there is to be less public anxiety about nuclear power stations, it is to be hoped that the communication machine of the nuclear industry will be overhauled and restructured so that in future there may be more prompt and professional utterances, should there be any incident, however minor. Above all, international co-operation is expected on the treatment and effects of radiation. The work of Dr. Gale, the American doctor who went to Moscow, and the Russian openness about the accident are seen as positive sides of this terrible disaster. The general public expect this togetherness, forged in adversity, to continue and will not understand a return to positions of national jealousy and mistrust.

The anti-nuclear lobby has been demanding for some years the closure of all nuclear power stations, maintaining that an energy conservation policy and the use of renewable sources of energy for generation would allow demand and production to be equated. That is not so. Unfortunately, the view of the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) that we can generate all our electricity from renewable sources and supplement it by energy efficiency would not allow demand to be met. Some energy will probably come from renewable sources. I hope that it does, and I support it. However, only 7 per cent. by 2020 will come from renewables. As for hydrocarbons, even if the big hole in Sweden is right, hydrocarbons are finite and should be conserved as a valuable premium fuel for the chemical industry and aviation.

The challenge of providing energy for our grandchildren as hydrocarbon fuels run out is just as great as the challenge of protecting them from radiation. If we do not find an alternative source of energy, we shall have high energy prices that will mean that many of the old people whom we wish to protect will be unable to afford to keep themselves warm in winter and that the Third world will be unable to buy the fuel that it needs to power its industry at a time when energy is running short.

In conclusion, there is individual and collective concern about nuclear power, enhanced to a considerable extent by lack of understanding and lack of technical education. Naturally, the public turn to the easier options, ignorant of the arithmetic that would reveal the weakness of their choice. It is unlikely that the anti-nuclear energy lobby will cease its campaign against nuclear power, but it is to be hoped that the nuclear industry will respond to the need for uniformity, simplicity and figures in its public relations approach if it is to earn the measure of public acceptability that I believe it deserves.

9.24 pm

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): The Secretary of State is to be congratulated on his honesty about the need for nuclear power when he opened the debate. He showed more honesty than has been evident in many previous debates. Having listened to the right hon. Gentleman's remarks, we can have no doubt at all that the reason why the Government are determined to go ahead with Sizewell B has little to do with evidence about costs or safety and everything to do with weakening the position of the coal industry and its trade unions.

The right hon. Gentleman made great claims about the activities of our competitors, giving as examples the only two countries to have substantially expanded their nuclear industries in terms of orders over the past 10 years—France and Japan. However, it must be remembered that Japan, which has massively increased its activities in the nuclear industry, has been importing 90 per cent. of its energy for a very long time because it has none of its own and that 90 per cent. of the imported energy has been oil. Obviously, after the oil crisis in the 1970s Japan had to look for an alternative source of energy. In Britain, we have never needed to do that. We have hundreds of years' worth of coal, and the Secretary of State knows that quite well.

There is no doubt that the international price of fossil fuels calls into question the cost argument for going ahead with Sizewell B. No one can move away from that fact. Even those who advised Layfield in the first instance now say that because of the fall in the cost of fossil fuel there may be no justification on cost grounds. There is even less justification on safety grounds. Hon. Members have mentioned Chernobyl, but we have not really discussed the outcome of that accident, even in this country. We have heard recently of an outlay in compensation to sheep farmers in north Wales and Cumbria of £4 million, with a further £1 million spent on monitoring the sheep. There are still thousands of sheep that cannot be moved from one part of the country to another or put on the market because of the Chernobyl accident. It is extremely likely that we do not yet have anything like a proper knowledge of the eventual costs.

The Secretary of State and others talked about jobs in the nuclear industry as affected by Labour party policy. Let me say to hon. Members and to the nuclear industry that there are generations of work in the nuclear industry — in the decommissioning of nuclear power stations when their useful life has ended, and in the disposal of nuclear waste. None of us suggests that we would cut employment in the nuclear industry to the levels that have been suggested today. The Labour party certainly does not want to take on the mantle of the present Government, who have put 3 million people into the dole queues since 1978-79. That is certainly not what we are about. We are here to protect and enhance employment rather than to get rid of it.

9.28 pm

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): The Secretary of State is invariably robust when he has a bad case, and he made a very robust speech today. I think that he was uncertain not because of his future political prospects—although I gather that those are limited—but because he ignored three issues. First, he ignored the fact that the costs of the Government's nuclear waste policy have suddenly been transformed in recent weeks. He knows that, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) said, there is already an overrun on the PWR programme. Secondly, he ignored the requests of several Labour Members, made when we last debated PWRs. We pointed out that the House was considering documents relating to health near nuclear power stations, and that, in case after case, the authors of those documents had suggested that further research was needed. We asked the Government for an assurance that that medical research would be continued, and we still await a serious commitment from them on this very important matter.

Another aspect of the Secretary of State's speech that concerned me was that he told us how rapidly the whole world was moving towards a dependency upon nuclear energy. Yet the world lacks adequate capacity to deal with the waste that it is increasingly producing. The Secretary of State should have commented more fully on that aspect.

Since I wish to be brief, I shall conclude by saying that I agreed with one part of the speech of the Secretary of State, when he reminded the House that SDP Members were absent. They were absent throughout the last debate on PWR. They have been absent throughout this one. All three of the SDP's local election candidates were absent from the count last week in my constituency and so far the party has forgotten to appoint an SDP candidate in my constituency—perhaps it will not bother. If it does, it will be reminded of the irresponsibility of its absence, just as I remind the Secretary of State that a great deal of his speech was irresponsible. Perhaps the greatest irresponsibility was the fact that he overlooked referring to health, to cost and to the fact that, since the last Sizewell debate,

[Mr. Peter Hardy]

he has received submissions from senior scientists of professorial rank who have asked him to think again. It is time that he did.

9.30 pm

Mr. Alexander Eadie (Midlothian): I hope that the House will forgive me if I comment on my hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McGuire), who told us that he was making his last speech in the House. As usual, it was a robust speech, and I am sure that he enjoyed it as much as the House.

The general climate surrounding this debate has been, to put it mildly, a bit unusual. Nevertheless, many hon. Members have been successful in getting their views on the record. Perhaps in a more sober time, and if we had had longer, there could have been more of the cut and thrust of debate on the issues.

I remember as a boy seeing the slogan, "Smoking factories, not smoking guns." It is doubtful that such a slogan would today capture the same imagination and receive endorsement in the light of the pressure that many groups exercise for a pollution-free environment. After the second world war, a body of public opinion was shocked at the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Arising from that, a progressive movement took root which adopted as its slogan "Atoms for Peace." I beg to suggest that that was the forerunner of what we know today as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. It was not a sloganising movement. As a movement, in general it took the view that scientific and technological study should be used for the benefit of mankind. Its members were not, therefore, Luddite in believing that the atom could not be harnessed for peaceful purposes and that never again should there be a repeat of the horror and consequences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Britain was the first country to develop thermal nuclear power and, between 1956 and 1971, it built 11 Magnox reactors as a first generation of nuclear power stations. 1956 was a significant date, for it was the year of the Suez crisis, our withdrawal from the middle east in ignominy, and the closure of the Suez canal. The advent of Britain into civil nuclear power was seen by many at that time as part of the answer to build up a self-reliant indigenous source to counter the uncertainties and instability of the middle east. But, looking back to that period, the consensus among practically all the main political parties and the approval of all the trade unions was remarkable. For years, the main thrust of criticism was that industry was too secretive and that its costs were open to serious question. Although there have been incidents at nuclear power stations, the secret nature of industry meant that there was little reportage to them, and they have only recently started to be more prominently catalogued.

The major event which laid the basis for the breaking of the consensus support of civil nuclear power was the partial meltdown of a civil nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island in the United States of America. It was an American-designed pressurised water reactor, which uses more enriched fuel than the AGR, which is the second-generation thermal nuclear power station that Britain has built. I shall deal with that later. American PWRs operate at a far higher temperature than advanced gas-cooled reactors. In fact, they operate at double the pressure and at a far higher temperature than the RBMK reactor that gave rise to the Chernobyl disaster.

Since the Layfield inquiry was first launched, in a campaign the Central Electricity Generating Board has been promising orders all over the country and has coupled that with rubbishing other nuclear reactor types in Britain. It did that even before the decision was known. At this stage, I should point out that the South of Scotland Electricity Board was not in favour of a pressurised water reactor. The actions and decisions of the CEGB to build a Three Mile Island type of nuclear reactor have played a not insignificant part in increasing doubts and fears about civil nuclear power. I have described it in many speeches in this House as a bastard type of PWR that will be built in Britain. We have never built one before. We say that it will be different. However, experience of virgin reactors is of delays, difficulties and high costs, as my hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield has described.

Today — several billlion dollars later — we are receiving reports about attempts to clean up the Three Mile Island reactor. Apparently, life has been found within the site. However, I suspect that in part that owes something to the discovery that was made in the 18th century by Dr. Louis Pasteur, of pasteurisation fame, of what he described as "spontaneous generation". Whatever else the Chernobyl accident may have done, it has illustrated the fact that civil nuclear power is too unforgiving. Whatever the advance of technology, the margin for human error can be present in a fail-safe system. Irrespective of the designs of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, that aspect has been identified.

We must examine nuclear power and its problems. For much of the time since the initial development of nuclear power as a source of energy, it was assumed that it would provide limitless energy cheaply, cleanly and safely. However, those assumptions have proved untenable. In many cases, they have been disproved by the realities of the cost of construction, the technical difficulties of production, the increasing problems of the disposal of waste, and the security of materials.

Chernobyl realised grave doubts about the safety of nuclear power stations. Against that background, it is reasonable to ask whether there are other satisfactory means of meeting our energy requirements. In Britain, we can identify reserves of coal for 300 years; they could even last for 1,000 years. We also have oil and gas resources. An energy conservation policy would extend the life of our fossil fuels. It would raise the standards of insulation and the quality of housing and help to sustain employment.

Although our present reserves of fossil fuels are finite, there are enough of them to give us valuable time to get on with the task of developing alternative means of power, heat and light such as the renewable energy sources, of solar, wind, tidal and geothermal power. Last year in the House I led in a debate on alternative energy sources, and I identified the fact that the total Government budget for research and development in 1984-85 was a paltry £15 million compared with a parallel budget for nuclear power of £154 million.

Mr. Peter Walker: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that £15 million in one year from this Government is better than £7 million in five years from the Labour Government?

Mr. Eadie: I concede that immediately, but revenues from North sea oil under the Labour Government totalled £800 million, whereas this Government have received £53·4 billion. The amount spent on alternative energy sources has been a disgrace.

Two dangers must concern all of us. The first is the risk of a major accident at a nuclear power station. Chernobyl has given us a chilling account of what a serious nuclear accident can involve. Some 50,000 people had to be evacuated from a 19-mile zone around Chernobyl and radiation was so intense that it was lethal in two hours. Many square miles of Soviet earth are now poisoned by radioactive isotopes which will pose a threat to human life for decades ahead. Last autumn I visited Norway with the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) and we learnt that the reindeer herds in the north had to be slaughtered because of the radiation.

The second danger involves the disposal of nuclear waste which is an unavoidable byproduct of the nuclear industry. Yet the serious problems of its disposal and the dangers of pollution have yet to be dealt with satisfactorily by any country.

Other countries have responded to Chernobyl. In Yugoslavia plans have been cancelled for a second reactor; orders in Belgium and the Netherlands have been postponed; Italy's new reactor project has been brought to a halt by the local council; Austria is dismantling an unused reactor; Finland has suspended a decision to build another reactor; in Sweden, where nuclear power generates about 50 per. cent. of its energy requirement, it is planned to phase out nuclear power in under 25 years; and in the United States, although nuclear power is planned to increase by 40 per cent. in the next few years, it will come from reactors whose construction began 15 years ago. There have been no new orders since 1978 and there are no plans for the foreseeable future. Therefore, there should be no more civil nuclear power stations built in this country and a start should be made on phasing them out.

In Britain we have 11 first generation Magnox stations, 10 of which have been operating for 20 years. It was intended that a safety review should be carried out before they continued beyond that age. Our second generation stations include five AGRs and a further two are under construction.

The PWR is discredited on cost. The capital cost of Sizewell B has already increased more than 30 per cent. above its original estimate. To judge from the United States experience of building PWR stations, the present estimate of £1·5 billion will undergo considerable slippage before Sizewell B is built.

The CEGB provided the Energy Select Committee with information showing that the decommissioning costs for each Magnox station would be £270 million. Individual Magnox stations cost £500 million to construct at today's prices. However, no full-size commercial station has yet been decommissioned anywhere in the world.

Decommissioning costs are likely to be even more than 54 per cent. of capital costs. The Government always mention France when the costs of nuclear power are discussed, but they always ignore the fact that the capital indebtedness of electricity to France is some £20 billion, which is not taken into consideration in pricing. The French argue that they have no alternative to nuclear power because they have no gas or oil and only small reserves. We do not accept that. Britain by contrast has huge reserves of all three and is a net exporter of energy.

There is no need for nuclear energy, especially when renewable energy such as one-way solar and geothermal heat is taken into account. Therefore, the safety element is discredited. It is a too unforgiving technology, and that is why I say to my hon. Friends that we should phase it out and that they should support our amendment.

9.45 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): The hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) has followed his predecessors in seeking to draw some relevance from the fact that the United States has not ordered any new nuclear power stations since 1978. He might like to reflect on the fact that it is also true that the United States has not ordered any new coal-fired power stations since 1978. Therefore, it may be reasonable to conclude that, because of its massive nuclear programme, the United States has met the capacity of its requirements.

I should like to pay tribute to the speeches that have been made, particularly the constructive and thoughtful speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford (Dr. Clarke) and the supportive speeches of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Blackpool, North (Mr. Miscampbell) and my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton). My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) inquired about the future of Chapelcross. I pay tribute to the work that is done in that nuclear power station and I say to my hon. Friend that there is a long-term review occurring with regard to the Magnox stations, including Chapelcross. The consequences of that review will be taken into account in determining their future. But the safety of Chapelcross and other stations can be considered to be reliable at the present time, which is in part due to the high standards of work of the employees at that station.

The issue in the debate is not one between those who are passionate supporters of nuclear power and those who wish to remove it completely, because the Government's postion is quite simple. We want a balanced energy programme; not one that is dominated by nuclear power but one that relies on a spectrum of sources of fuel and of means of generating electricity. The Labour party and the other Opposition parties are committed to what can properly be described as an extremist position because they wish to phase out all nuclear power. The line-up of those on either side of the debate shows that on one side, completely against nuclear power, is the Leader of the Opposition, and on the other side is his colleague the shadow environment spokesman, the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham). On one side of the equation against nuclear power is the Labour party. On the other side is not only the Conservative party, but the Scottish TUC. The hon. Member for Midlothian should have referred to that fact. One finds on one side of the debate at least one half of the so-called alliance and on the other side the other half of it.

I was interested by the wording of the Opposition's amendment for the debate because in a short few lines it encapsulates at least three fundamental errors and misconceptions. First, it suggests that within this country nuclear power,

"has not in practice provided the country with . . ."

a

[The Secretary of State for Scotland]

"cheap and safe electricity supply".

We have not had any evidence to suggest that electricity has not been supplied safely in this country. Indeed, the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) repeated his statement that he believed that the British nuclear industry was probably the safest in the world, thereby going against the assertions in the amendment. If we are concerned about safety records, for many years the coal industry, as the hon. Member for Midlothian will be the first to admit, sadly and tragically, has suffered fatalities and injuries of a kind that the nuclear industry has not experienced.

The amendment also suggests that a non-nuclear energy policy would allow greater use of British technology than would the Government's approach. To refute that argument, I do not ask the House merely to listen to the views of the Government. In a document published only last month the Scottish TUC referred to its belief that there would be an energy gap and a need for nuclear power in the future and stated:

> "A shutdown of the British nuclear industry now would almost certainly mean total reliance on imported technology in the future—technology in the development of whose safety standards we would have little say."

When the Conservative Government and the Scottish TUC agree, which does not happen often, the Opposition should appreciate the force of the argument.

Mr. McGuire: The right hon. and learned Gentleman sought to give the impression that the dangers of coal mining were comparable with the dangers of nuclear power. The most dangerous industry in this country is agriculture. Does the Secretary of State want to close that industry down? A few years ago in what was then my constituency there was a tragic explosion in a coal mine, but it did not spill over and contaminate half of the western world. Why does the right hon. and learned Gentleman draw such stupid analogies?

Mr. Rifkind: The Opposition amendment states that the safety record of the nuclear industry in this country is not one in which we should have confidence. The hon. Gentleman cannot deny what his right hon. Friend the Member for Salford, East is the first to admit—that this country's record is the best of any in the world.

If we are really interested in the prospects for the British economy, the employment implications of our energy policy must be a fundamental consideration. The Opposition amendment seeks to suggest that employment prospects would somehow be advanced if reliance on nuclear power were phased out, but there is no evidence to substantiate that claim. At least 100,000 jobs depend directly or indirectly on the nuclear industry and fully 44,000 of those are in the various nuclear organisations. Moreover, in a number of communities around the country reliance on the nuclear industry is of enormous importance. Dounreay, for instance, is not just the third largest employer in Caithness—*[Interruption.]* I imagine that the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) is not here because he is trying to persuade his constituents how much he supports the nuclear industry.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): The Secretary of State has a bit of a neck talking about jobs associated with energy and about Scottish communities depending on those jobs when he knows how many people relied on the coal industry before the Government deliberately destroyed their jobs.

The Secretary of State has merely skated around the safety question. Why was the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board, whom the right hon. and learned Gentleman himself appointed, so critical of the safety record of PWRs and how can the Government be satisfied with a mere three kilometre evacuation zone around nuclear installations in Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman should be the first to be cautious about intervening in this debate. We shall long remember how, when he first sought election to the House, he professed himself to be a great supporter of Torness and only when he thought himself safely elected to the House did he suddenly support Labour party policy. A period of silence from the hon. Gentleman would be well advised.

The implications of the Opposition policy concern not only the jobs that would be directly or indirectly lost as a result of phasing out nuclear power stations—there is also the effect on electricity tariffs that such a policy would produce; because the SSEB estimates that to abandon support for the nuclear power industry would mean an increase in such tariffs in Scotland of between 20 and 30 per cent. We know that the Finnish pulp mill that is to be established in Irvine with about 1,000 jobs and a major investment would have had no opportunity of being won for Scotland if the policy of the right hon. Member for Salford, East had been adopted.

Mr. Orme: Why is the South of Scotland Electricity Board opposed to the PWR and in favour of the AGR? Where does the right hon. and learned Gentleman stand on that?

Mr. Rifkind: The right hon. Gentleman should appreciate that I regularly meet Mr. Miller, the chairman of the SSEB. He has emphasised to me, and has said publicly, that he is satisfied with the safety record of either system but, naturally, as he had had AGRs at Torness and Hunterston, the evidence that he gave to the inquiry pointed out the particular advantages of the AGR system.

I do not want to leave out the alliance. We know that on 14 September 1986 the SDP conference voted for an expansion of the nuclear power programme. We know that 11 days later the Liberal assembly voted to abandon the nuclear programme. We know that, on matters of principle, it is a fundamental characteristic of the new alliance that it is different from other parties. It does not like to conceal matters from the public; it likes to apply a holier than thou attitude to these important issues. The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), the leader of the SDP, had anticipated the possibility of a difference of view because he had commented some time earlier that, with regard to nuclear power,

"we cannot have an uneasy fudge".

He was quite right: we did not end up with an uneasy fudge—we ended up with the easiest fudge imaginable. Faced with a choice between expanding nuclear power—which the SDP wanted—or abandoning it—as the Liberal party wanted—this great alliance of principle decided to abandon both policies and ended up with a little bit of both. It decided to end up with a policy that said, "We will not get rid of existing power stations, nor build any new ones." That, we are told to believe, is an example of new integrity in public life on the part of a party that puts principle before expediency and seeks to impress the public.

This holier than thou attitude is not peculiar to the modern Liberal party. One recalls how, 100 years ago, Labouchere said of Gladstone:

> "I don't object to Gladstone always having the ace of trumps up his sleeve, merely to his belief that the Almighty put it there".

The British public faces a clear choice. Does it want an energy policy that is balanced with regard to sources of supply for generation of the power that this country needs? Does it accept the views, not only of the Government, but of the Scottish Trades Union Congress which said:

> "There is a serious danger that in the not too distant future Britain and the rest of the world could encounter an energy gap without the maintenance of a significant contribution from nuclear power. This is a real problem".

We recognise that that is a real problem and that the Third and developing worlds need nuclear power if they are to have any chance of meeting the requirements for energy that so many in the industrialised world take for granted. We realise that there are literally tens of thousands of jobs in this country and the rest of the world that are dependent on nuclear power either for direct employment, or because the increased electricity costs that would otherwise obtain would be devastating to their economies. The Opposition, having committed themselves to phasing out nuclear power, know that that is a policy that is fundamentally against the interests of the Labour movement, as expressed by the Scottish TUC, and the interests of the energy industry as a whole. It is for that reason that I have no hesitation in asking the House to reject the irresponsible amendment of the Opposition and to give thumping approval to the Government's motion.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 182, Noes 340.

Division No. 180] **[10.00 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosemary
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas

Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek

Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Edward
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David

Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Matthew
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Allen Adams.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony

Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*

Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Cartiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Prior, Rt Hon James
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hert'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 340, Noes 181.

Division No. 181] **[10.15 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, Da[illegible]
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony

Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gourlay, Harry
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldf'd)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil

Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Prior, Rt Hon James
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Viggers, Peter

Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

NOES

Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosemary
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Edward
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Matthew
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Allen Adams.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House, recognising the advantages to the country of having a diversity of energy supply, including coal, gas, oil and nuclear power, welcomes the Secretary of State for Energy's decision to give consent to the construction of the Sizewell B PWR and thus recognises the important contribution that nuclear energy is making and will continue to make to the provision of cheap and efficient electricity and the strength of the British economy; also recognises that the industry is a major source of employment; and deplores the policies of the Opposition parties that would sacrifice that employment.

Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland)

10.27 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Viggers): I beg to move,

That the draft Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 22nd January, be approved.

The draft order, with a few exceptions, contains provisions analogous to those enacted in Great Britain in the Employment Act 1982. The purpose of that Act on introduction was twofold: first, to safeguard the liberty of the individual from the abuse of industrial power; secondly, to improve the operation of the labour market by providing a more balanced framework of industrial relations law. The Act was a further, and successful, step by Government to restore the balance between the rights and obligations of unions, management and the community, and it is that success that has informed our proposal to apply similar provisions in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has its own separate legislative and administrative framework of industrial relations, but in general it has followed closely Great Britain law in this transferred area. At present, Northern Ireland is two steps behind Great Britain in respect of industrial relations legislation—that is, the Employment Act 1982 and the Trade Union Act 1984. The order will help to redress the situation, and reflects the Government's view that there should be parity in industrial relations provision between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, unless there are exceptional local considerations that would justify a different approach. Such parity is particularly important when we are dealing with the basic rights and responsibilities of individuals, employers and trade unions, as in the present legislation.

In considering the application of the 1982 Act, we naturally judged it essential fully to consult interested parties, including trade unions and employers' organisations. Detailed consultations took place on the basis that the Government would want to follow the provisions of the Employment Act 1982, except where there was a compelling case for a different course, in the circumstances obtaining in Northern Ireland.

Despite the views of the trade union movement in Northern Ireland against replication of the 1982 Act, I have to say that the Government do not consider that a substantive and persuasive case for a different course of action in Northern Ireland has been made.

The order contains 25 articles. The key provisions address aspects of the closed shop and trade union immunities. In relation to the closed shop, the order will extend the protection the law provides for those who work in closed shops by requiring validation of the closed shop through a ballot if dismissal for non-union membership is to be regarded as fair and by providing enhanced compensation for closed shop dismissals found to be unfair. The anomaly whereby trade unions enjoy a far wider immunity than their individual officials will also be brought to an end.

I now propose to go through the order in a little more detail. Articles 1 and 2 are self-explanatory and deal with the title, commencement and interpretation of terms used in the order. Article 3 concerns employee involvement and requires directors' reports of companies employing an average of 250 employees in any financial year to contain a statement describing what action has been taken during the year to introduce, maintain or develop arrangements aimed at furthering employee involvement. This article is not designed to compel companies to take steps towards greater employee involvement, but companies affected will have to report what steps, if any, have been taken. It is expected that this will involve only some 230 companies in Northern Ireland, due to the high proportion of smaller firms in that economy, but it is nevertheless a wholly desirable provision.

Turning now to the closed shop, the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1982 provided additional grounds on which dismissal for non-membership of a trade union was to be regarded as unfair, namely, where the employee objected to trade union membership on grounds of conscience or other deeply held personal conviction and where the employee was an existing non-member of the union when the union membership agreement took effect.

Article 4 of and schedule 1 to this order provide for compensation to be claimed by those employees dismissed from their employment, due to non-membership of a trade union in a closed shop on or after 1 October 1976, when the 1976 closed shop provisions came into force in Northern Ireland, and before 4 May 1982, when the 1982 amendments came into force, and who would have been eligible for compensation under the 1982 order, had it been in force at that time. This parity provision brings Northern Ireland into line with an existing ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, and while we are not aware of any likely Northern Ireland claimants it is clearly important and proper that the European Court ruling is given legislative effect in Northern Ireland, as in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Articles 5 to 12 give new rights to individuals working in a closed shop to protect them from unfair dismissal, or action short of dismissal, due to their refusal to join a union and provide increased levels of compensation for employees unfairly dismissed in certain circumstances. Articles 5 and 11 build on changes introduced by the 1982 order by providing additional circumstances in which dismissal, or action short of dismissal, for non-membership of a trade union become unfair. The most important of these circumstances makes dismissal unfair where a closed shop agreement has not in the preceding five years been approved by the requisite majority in a secret ballot. Those who advocate the closed shop, or who wish to safeguard their interests through such an arrangement, should be willing to submit it to periodic scrutiny and the test of employee opinion.

The new framework of compensation for unfair dismissals arising either from a closed shop or from trade union membership or activities is set out in articles 6 and 7. It consists of a minimum basic award of £2,200 and a new special award of twice the annual salary, subject to a minimum of £11,000 and a maximum of £22,000 if the applicant asks for reinstatement but the tribunal does not order it, or three times the annual salary, subject to a minimum of £16,500 but no maximum if the employer refuses to comply with an order to reinstate. It is intended that at the time the order comes into operation these limits will be increased by subordinate legislation to £2,300, £11,500, £23,000 and £17,250 respectively, to maintain parity with those operating in Great Britain since 1 April this year. These awards are additional to the

[Mr. Peter Viggers]

compensatory award, whose current maximum is £8,500, which is now in force for the generality of unfair dismissals. In the event that reduction of the total award is contemplated, by virtue of the employee's conduct before dismissal, article 8 provides that no account may be taken of a breach by the employee of any requirement in contract that he must be either a member or a non-member of a union.

Articles 9 and 12 provide that, in proceedings before an industrial tribunal in which compensation is claimed for unfair dismissal, or action short of dismissal, as a result of trade union pressure, the claimant may request joinder of that union as a third party to the proceedings brought against the employer. At the moment, such joinder is available only to an employer. Any award of compensation may be wholly against the employer or the union or it may be apportioned between the employer and the union. These provisions require in effect that unions, like employers, should be prepared to stand over actions for which they are responsible.

A closed shop is normally the result of negotiations between an employer and one or more trade unions representing his employees. But it is important to ensure that closed shops are not brought in by back door pressure through union labour only requirements in contracts.

Articles 13 and 14, therefore, provide that any terms or conditions in contracts for the supply of goods or services requiring contractors to operate a closed shop or to recognise, negotiate or consult with a trade union are void. Further, it will be a breach of statutory duty if such a contract is withheld or terminated on those grounds and any persons adversely affected can sue for damages. These provisions would be ineffective if trade unions were free to accomplish the same result by industrial action. Article 15, therefore, removes immunity from trade unions that put pressure on an employer to contravene articles 13 and 14.

The next part of the order, covered by articles 16 to 19, deals with trade union immunities and provides for trade unions to have the same immunity as individual trade union officials and other organisers of industrial action. This is significant in that, since 1906, trade unions in Northern Ireland, like their British counterparts prior to 1982, have enjoyed total immunity from civil actions in tort even if they have acted unlawfully. Most reasonable opinion would regard this as an anomaly which requires correction. Articles 16 and 17 therefore introduce a measure of change which still leaves trade unions with a significant degree of protection. Article 16 confers sufficient legal personality on trade unions and unincorporated employers' associations for them to sue and be sued in their own name, while article 17 abolishes the special and wider immunities for trade unions granted by section 4 of the Trade Disputes Act 1906 and brings them into line with those granted to other persons.

Broadly speaking, unions will be liable for unlawful acts, such as blacking or secondary picketing, that are authorised or endorsed by a "responsible person", for example, the principal executive committee, president, general secretary and so on or by the national executive or national officials. Article 18 sets upper limits on the damages which may be awarded against a trade union in any single set of proceedings, while article 19 protects certain trade union property from awards of damages, costs or expenses. These protected funds include union provident funds and political funds which are not used to finance industrial action.

A further main change made by the order is the tightening up of the definition of trade dispute. For a dispute to be lawful under the terms of article 20, it must be between workers and their employer and wholly or mainly about matters such as pay, conditions or jobs.

Articles 22 and 23 make minor changes to the method of computation of a period of continuous employment by providing that the calculation will, in future, be based on calendar years and months rather than, as at present, on years of 52 weeks. The 52-week year was an artificial creation which caused all sorts of administrative difficulties in ascertaining length of service. A special service calendar has to be published each year and, even so, employers often get it wrong. The change to a calendar year will simplify matters for all concerned.

Article 24 makes statutory provision for schemes designed to assist unemployed persons improve their employment prospects either through temporary employment, self-employment or voluntary work. These include schemes such as action for community employment, enterprise allowance, and community volunteering—all of which are particularly important in Northern Ireland —which are already in operation in the Province but are funded on an extra-statutory basis.

Some will say that the legislation is irrelevant to the real industrial relations needs of Northern Ireland; and individual trade unions may take exception to certain detailed provisions in the order.

Mr. John Hume (Foyle): What puzzles me about the bringing forward of this order, is that the Minister's own Department, together with the Industrial Development Board, in promoting industrial investment in Northern Ireland—I support them in doing that—hold up as a major attraction for investment in Northern Ireland the high quality of industrial relations there and the low level of strikes. That being so, why does the Minister wish to interfere with that?

Mr. Viggers: In talking about inward investment and the promotion of the prospects of companies in Northern Ireland, it would be wrong if I let that opportunity pass without saying that I am grateful for and aware of the efforts that the hon. Gentleman has made to promote investment in his constituency, and in the whole of Northern Ireland. His efforts have been most strenuous and helpful.

On the Minister's significant point about the good industrial relations in Northern Ireland, yes we boast with justification of the good industrial relations record there. However, that does not mean that the provisions proposed by this order to rectify the balance between individual workers and trade unions should not be extended to Northern Ireland so that individual workers there have the background of the industrial framework that workers in Great Britain have enjoyed for some years.

Apart from the fact that the order rectifies the balance between employer, union and individual union member, which is extremely important, another extremely significant point is that many in Northern Ireland—the Government certainly take this view—would regard it as most unfortunate if there should be a growing divergence between industrial relations law there and that in Great

Britain. As I pointed out earlier, industrial relations legislation in Northern Ireland is currently two steps behind that in Great Britain. If we did not pass this order, that growing divergence would concern many people who feel it important that the legislation should be the same. Although I agree with the hon. Gentleman that industrial relations in Northern Ireland are better, that does not destroy my point.

As I have said, when dealing with the economic problems of Northern Ireland it is essential that all who are seeking to do business there should be reassured that Northern Ireland is not diverging from the broad progress and developments that are taking place in industrial relations legislation in the rest of the United Kingdom. I am convinced that economic development and regeneration are more likely in a climate of industrial stability and where there are legislative safeguards against the abuse of industrial power. Further, the protection of individual rights is an important matter in its own right. There is a balance to be struck between the protection of individual liberty and legitimate and reasonable use of collective power.

Half the articles in the order deal with the closed shop. It is against the traditions of personal liberty in this country to be required to join a union in order to obtain or hold a job, and our first consideration in questions about the closed shop must be the freedom and rights of the individual. The order also corrects the anomaly whereby trade unions have enjoyed a virtually total immunity from actions in tort, an immunity wider than that enjoyed by any other person or organisation in this country. This means that people who previously would not have been able to bring civil proceedings to secure redress against unlawful behaviour will now be able to do so. This is a reaffirmation of an individual's right to seek justice and to be compensated for harm suffered. Protection of these rights is just as important in Northern Ireland as it is in Great Britain.

10.43 pm

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): As I listened to the Minister introduce the order, I must confess that I found myself feeling sorry for him. He tried to convey some sense of enthusiasm for what he was doing, but, if I may say so, and it is no reflection on his powers of advocacy, he sounded like a reluctant messenger. He depressed me too.

At the end of the debate last Wednesday, it was clear that the political leaders in Northern Ireland were not prepared to change a word of the speeches that they have been making from the beginning of time. No one was willing to make a minor concession, let alone to share a new vision, and we knew that direct rule, with all its shortcomings, would be with us for the foreseeable future. I reflected that, deep as are the differences between us, the Government might now be as anxious as we are to improve the procedures of this House as they apply to Northern Ireland. Indeed, I assume that hon. Members from the alliance parties might have agreed with me, had they taken the trouble to attend this debate.

Now, as this Parliament breathes its last, and at the end of the day's main business, the Government have introduced what they must know is one of the most controversial Northern Ireland measures this Session. We did not expect them to agree with all our arguments, but we expected them to recognise that the order raises issues in which deep emotions are involved, and that each issue merits a separate debate. They knew that there were legitimate views to be expressed on many of the provisions of the order and that suggestions to that effect had been made through the usual channels. Yet, they have introduced the measure by way of an unamendable order, debatable for an hour and a half late at night with no previous opportunity for the House to express an opinion. It is direct rule at its worst. The Government have demonstrated a contempt for the rights of the Opposition, a contempt of the House and a contempt of working people in Northern Ireland. But history has a way of passing judgment on the arrogant and one day it may be the Conservatives who appeal to the traditions of the constitution and plead the rights of minorities.

Why was it essential to introduce these provisions with such ungracious haste? What was the nature of the emergency which required the Government to disregard such principles of decency as they have not already abandoned? The Minister gave us two reasons. First, he said that we must achieve uniformity between the law of Great Britain and the law of Northern Ireland. Clearly, that is a matter to be taken into consideration and there have been occasions when we have wished that the Government had been more mindful of it. We have urged it on the Government during debates on the emergency provisions legislation, in the context of civil rights and in relation to the Payments for Debt Act.

Let us shed the hyprocrisy. The Government profess a concern for uniformity whenever it suits their book. If it happens not to coincide with the argument that they wish to advance, they do not spare it a second thought.

For many years the law on industrial relations has rarely been the same in Northern Ireland as in Great Britain. The law on the matters which form the subject of this order was introduced into Great Britain in 1982, so the law in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain has been different for five years with no adverse consequences. Why does the principle of uniformity suddenly become of such overriding importance that it is necessary to turn direct rule into a mockery?

Perhaps we may find a clue in the second reason that the Minister gave. He told us that it was all to do with protecting the rights of individuals. If there was a spark of merit in that argument I would be with him shoulder to shoulder. I have spent my political life crusading for the rights of individuals. We have just spent a whole Standing Committee debating the rights of individuals. But what has happened in industrial relations in Northern Ireland which has suddenly endangered the rights of individuals? Or what has been happening since 1982 which has now resulted in this sudden need to protect them? The answer, as the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) has just pointed out, is nothing.

Whatever other tragic quarrels have existed in Northern Ireland, industrial relations have been exemplary. The rest of the world has wished its industrial relations could be like those in Northern Ireland. As the hon. Gentleman reminded us, they have been a great selling point for the Government when they have sought to attract capital investment into Northern Ireland.

> "The Province offers industry an industrial relations record equal to that of West Germany and Japan, and the most productive and efficient workforce in Europe, with the highest academic standards."

That is not just my judgment or that of the hon. Member for Foyle. It is a direct quotation from the former Minister

[Mr. Peter Archer]

of State, Northern Ireland Office, the right hon. Member for Bosworth (Sir A. Butler) as reported by *The Irish Times* of 16 March 1984. Does the Minister suggest that anything has taken place since then which would invite us to review that judgment?

Industrial relations in Northern Ireland have been improving, as the hon. Member for Foyle pointed out. In 1982 the number of working days that were lost in Northern Ireland through industrial disputes per 1,000 employees was 195, compared with 249 in Great Britain. By 1986 the figure had fallen to 71 per 1,000.

When this order was ventilated, the former Minister of State was invited by the trade unions to specify any of the abuses at which these proposals were directed. He made no response to that invitation, except to say that it was directed to, "avoiding potential abuses".

If ever there was a solution in search of a problem it is this order. But the case against it is not merely that it serves no purpose; it is that it is positively pernicious. It will no longer be possible to say to the rest of the world, potential customers and potential investors, that industrial relations in Northern Ireland are free of problems because that would invoke the question, "Then what was all the fuss about?" It is not only that we shall not be able to say that there are no industrial relations problems, it may well not be true that there are no such problems because the order invites a reaction from the trade union movement. It will create industrial discord because it will bring to an end the consensus that has obtained until now. It will be seen and properly seen as a deliberate confrontation because that is exactly what it is. Even worse, it will frustrate the strategy that the trade union movement has successfully pursued of avoiding involvement in sectarian quarrels. The trade unions have provided a forum where those from differing traditions and with incompatible views could meet to discuss how to pursue their common objectives. They have bridged the sectarian divide with the Government's full approval. In that respect also they have earned tribute from Ministers in this Government. Speaking in the Belfast city hall on 29 February the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Patten), expressed this judgment:

> "The standard of the trade unions in Northern Ireland against bigotry, intolerance and violence, has won the widespread admiration and sympathy of all political parties in Great Britain. I would not like this opportunity to pass without paying my own personal tribute to the work of many brave and dedicated men and women in the Trade Union Movement in maintaining a civilising influence in this community throughout the last 15 years. What you have contributed here in Northern Ireland presents one of the most valuable of the many contributions which your Movement has made to our social and industrial history."

The Belfast *Newsletter* in an editorial on the previous day added this endorsement:

> "Without exception, trade unions in Northern Ireland have consistently done a superb job in directing people's minds in the correct way to live rather than the wrong way to die."

The Government are proposing to end that position. Do they think that it will be possible to avoid sectarian overtones if at every workplace where there is a membership agreement there must be a ballot? Have they no imagination? How can trade union officials conduct a ballot without raising debates about their stand in relation to demonstrations against the Anglo-Irish Agreement? How could there be a ballot without specific groups making it a condition of support that they will lend their voice to some sectarian campaign or other? The ballots will have more to do with who goes on marches, what flag flies over the workshop and what emblems appear on the shop floor than with recognition agreements.

As the hon. Member for Foyle reminded us, it is not only the closed shop provisions that set a direct course for disaster. The Employment Act 1982, the parent of today's untimely offspring, sought to put back the clock—as the Minister admitted, or even boasted—to the Taff Vale case and to remove immunities which in the United Kingdom were equivalent to the positive rights that trade unions enjoy elsewhere in the world and which we thought were no longer in the area of political dispute. Not only is that a direct challenge to three quarters of a century of industrial history, it may well raise the issue of sequestration of funds.

Uniformity or no, the situation in Northern Ireland is not similar to that in the rest of the United Kingdom. In Northern Ireland, the trade unions with headquarters in Belfast, in London and in Dublin have lived side by side. If the Government encourage the union-bashers to play for sequestration, the important difference between funds situated within the jurisdiction of the British courts and those deposited in the Republic will become vital. If minds are directed to the issue, because the Government insist on stirring these things up, some may see advantage in belonging to a union based in the Republic rather than in the United Kingdom. Or the converse may happen, and industrial disputes in one part of Ireland may spread to the other.

Do the Government take the Labour Relations Agency seriously? The danger that I have described has not been dreamed up by the unions or the Labour Front Bench. The Labour Relations Agency in its annual report for 1985-86 expresses concern on this very point. Or do the Government, with their neurotic obsessions, believe that the Labour Relations Agency, too, has been infiltrated by Communists?

I make just one point about the drafting of the order. As the Minister has said, in many ways it follows the 1982 Act, although one might have expected the Government by now to have learned something from experience on this side of the water. This legislation has not only to be argued in the Court of Appeal but be applied by people at the sharp end on the shop floor, by union officials and by managers. Those who drafted the order had at their disposal the most perfect instrument ever devised for communication — the language of Chaucer and Shakespeare, of Keats and of Shelley—but the following is what they produced. Paragraph (8) of the new article 22A states:

> "In any case where neither paragraph (4) nor paragraph (7) has the effect of displacing paragraph (3) and the employee"

—it then sets out three things that employees might do—

> "paragraph (3) shall not apply if the reason (or, if more than one, the principal reason) for his refusal was, in a case falling within sub-paragraph *(c)*(i), that his taking the action in question would be in breach of the code or, in a case falling within sub-paragraph *(c)*(ii), that if he became, or as the case may be remained, a member he would be required to take part in a strike, or other industrial action, which would be in breach of that code."

That is just what I have always said!

We thus have an order which purports to deal with a problem that never existed and which will gratuitously create problems that need never have arisen. It makes no contribution to solving the real industrial problems in Northern Ireland by providing jobs for people there. It is a recipe for discord, foisted on the House without any opportunity to discuss its abrasive details, merely to gratify the dogmatic obsession of the Prime Minister and the chairman of the Conservative party with union-bashing.

We are debating a draft order, but the Government have removed the "r" from the word "draft". We can only hope that before its damaging effects have run their course we shall be in a position to bring sanity and concord to the industrial processes in Northern Ireland. Tonight we can at least vote against it.

10.59 pm

Mr. J. Enoch Powell (South Down): The Minister, in moving the order, enunciated a principle with which it is difficult to disagree, despite the efforts of the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer): that parity of the law between all parts of the United Kingdom is in principle desirable unless a strong case to the contrary is shown; and that one of the areas in which the desirability of parity is self-evident is the law that governs employment and the rights of employees and trade unions. To argue that there are some parts of the kingdom in which the mischiefs against which legislation is aimed are less prevalent than in others is surely not an argument in favour of legislation that is patchily applied to different parts of the kingdom. The validity of whatever the legislation is applies equally, irrespective of the prevalence or otherwise of the mischiefs that the legislation attempts to prevent.

Mr. Archer: I unreservedly accord the right hon. Gentleman at least the accolade of being consistent in his advocacy of uniformity, which cannot be said of the Government. Does he believe that the need for this indecent haste, which has meant that we are not in a position to debate the details of the order, made uniformity desirable today?

Mr. Powell: I am coming immediately to the question of indecent haste, which seems to me a strange objection to raise against the order.

I was about to say that one of the characteristics of parity is simultaneity. It is impossible to say that all parts of the United Kingdom enjoy the same law if the same law is only applied to them at different times. This law has applied to the rest of the United Kingdom for five years, during which time it has not applied in Northern Ireland. Whatever may be the objections or otherwise to correcting that state of affairs exactly at this moment, I do not think that five years of disparity in this respect between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom, if it is to be removed, is being removed with indecent haste. But true parity, which involves simultaneity, can be obtained only in one way—and that is a way that has much else to commend it. It cannot be satisfactorily attained by passing legislation for Great Britain in this House and then, at some interval of time, by making an Order in Council under direct rule that applies to Northern Ireland.

There is only one genuine way in which parity of law can be created between all parts of the United Kingdom, and that is that that law is made at the same time, in the same way and in the same place by the representatives of all parts of the kingdom. I quite agree—and if this is implicit in the argument of the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West I *shall grant it to him*—that if the law made in 1982 for the rest of the United Kingdom is to apply to Northern Ireland, it should have been applied by the representatives of Northern Ireland taking part in the 1982 passage and debating of the legislation which applied to the whole of the United Kingdom.

It is only by United Kingdom legislation that we can ensure genuine parity of law between all parts of the Kingdom, and it is only in that way that the opinions and the possible variation in the impact of law in different parts of the United Kingdom can be brought to light by the well tried processes of debate in this House—debate which is responsible debate, because that which is being debated will apply to the constituents of hon. Members who take part in it.

In the death throes of this Parliament I shall refrain from entering upon the sordid reasons why for so long — indeed, strictly speaking, since 1920 the people inhabiting Northern Ireland have been denied the right to participate in the formation of the laws of the United Kingdom in this House of Commons. I shall say only that that denial is illustrated in a particular crass manner by the draft Order in Council.

I do not know whether the eyes of any hon. Members studying the order strayed to the schedule. Schedule 4 repeals the Trade Disputes Act 1906:

> "Extent of Repeal . . . The whole Act, so far as unrepealed."

So a United Kingdom statute of 1906 which, when it was made, applied to Northern Ireland as well as to the rest of the United Kingdom is apparently to be repealed as far as Northern Ireland is concerned by a schedule to an Order in Council. It is an abomination that we should have to proceed in this way. We do so simply because, quite artificially, and for reasons which have nothing whatever to do with the well-being of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom, the legislative process for Northern Ireland has deliberately been kept separate from that practised in the rest of the United Kingdom.

The time will come when there is a House of Commons which will no longer inflict that injustice on that part of the United Kingdom. There will come a time when the House of Commons, making law for the United Kingdom, will insist on making it for the whole of the United Kingdom at the same time. That time will come: it may come in the next Parliament, it may come later, but it will come. Meanwhile, we have no excuse for denying to Northern Ireland the application of law that was passed in 1982.

11.5 pm

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): No hon. Member holds more admiration than me for the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell), but he talks as though the rest of the United Kingdom is deliberately trying to keep the Northern Ireland part of our United Kingdom separate. Surely that is not true. In spite of the brilliance of the right hon. Gentleman's mind, it is nonsense to suggest that the rest of the United Kingdom has oppressed Northern Ireland and kept it separate from the rest of us.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell: The hon. Gentleman misheard me. I accused successive Governments of the United

[Mr. J. Enoch Powell]

Kingdom, for reasons which were not perhaps very apparent at the time, of having imposed this differentiation. If the hon. Gentleman cares to study the 1920 Act and the 1973 Act for the government of Northern Ireland, he will find that the House passed legislation which enforced on part of the United Kingdom a separate legislative procedure from that which the rest enjoys.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I accept all that, but whether it is a 1920 Act or a 1973 Act, the problem is that the rest of the United Kingdom wants the problems of Northern Ireland to be solved as pacifically as possible. I have a feeling that, in 1990 and 2000, the House will be talking about the same problem. Whether it be the problems arising out of what Cromwell did in Northern Ireland or the problem of Carson, or anything else, surely the rest of us have a right to ask, "For how long does this have to go on?"

It is no use saying it is the Roman Catholics, the Church of Ireland or the Church of England — people die, whether they be a Lord Justice or a member of the public caught in the crossfire when there was some great victory over terrorism. We have a right to ask for how long it will go on.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell: It will go on as long as the United Kingdom insists on treating Northern Ireland differently from the rest with the perceived and intended object of eventually separating it.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) must relate his remarks to the order. I have been lenient with him during his preamble.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: We have arrived at the nub of it —the order is part of it—when the right hon. Member for South Down asks, in effect, "Where are we getting to, and do we want Northern Ireland to be part of the rest of the United Kingdom?" The answer is that we do. However, I do not think that the rest of the United Kingdom is prepared for the united Northern Ireland part of the kingdom to rest day after day, week after week and month after month with the idea that one part of the United Kingdom can act as a tyranny against the rest of the United Kingdom when in the end there has to be a salvation of a problem of part of our United Kingdom. The inference that those of us who say that there is a way out of the impasse want to sell out one part of the United Kingdom to another is entirely false and entirely unfair.

As I have said, I have the greatest admiration for the right hon. Member for South Down, but for him to say that those of us who talk about solving the problem wish to sell out a part of the United Kingdom is a travesty of the truth. The other part of the United Kingdom is saying that it is fed up with and tired of pouring in its treasury in money and people only for its people to be put to the sword, with one part of the United Kingdom saying that there can never be any other good but the United Kingdom being torn apart by this small part of our United Kingdom.

The time has come for Northern Ireland to recognise that the rest of the United Kingdom is tired of the carnage and tired of the tyranny of small groups who say that there is no other way. Whether it is the Member of this place who will not take his seat or the Members who have taken their seats but will not perform in the House, the rest of the United Kingdom is tired of the killing. The killing must stop at some stage, and surely that time is now.

11.13 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I find it sad that the order deals with a group in the Province which has been in the forefront in campaigning day in and day out against sectarianism. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland agreed with an oral question which I put to him about six months ago about a conference that was being organised by the trade unions in Northern Ireland against sectarianism. It was decided to hold a special one-day conference to make it clear that whatever the differences are that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) has been referring to, when it comes to the future of Northern Ireland, in the eyes of Republicans or Loyalists, taking into account the background and all the rest of it, the role of the trade unions is to unite working people and to try to establish on a daily basis at places of employment the ability of people to work together regardless of their political views or religious affiliations. I speak as a member and officer of a trade union which has members in Northern Ireland. One of the late officials of my union, Harold Binks, played a distinguished role for many years in promoting trade union unity among people with very different backgrounds. He was recognised for his contribution both in Northern Ireland and in the Irish Republic.

Unfortunately, hardly a single day goes by without Northern Ireland being in the news. We all know why. It is because of the terrorist bombings and killings. So many people have difficulty in living their lives because of the terrorist actions of whichever side of the sectarian divide.

The Minister agreed that the trade unions in Northern Ireland have campaigned against terrorism. Therefore, why is it that, in the dying days of this Parliament, penal legislation against those trade unions should be passed? It is an odd way to show understanding. It is a odd way to pay tribute to trade unions in Northern Ireland. Why should anti-trade union legislation, arising from the Employment Act 1982, be applied to trade unions in Northern Ireland?

How will such legislation be interpreted abroad? News of Northern Ireland takes up much coverage not only in our media, but in the media of other European countries and the United States. What will be said of the British Government? Considering all the problems of Northern Ireland the Government have found time, in the last week of this Parliament, to introduce such legislation. Why now? I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer)—indeed, I said so in an earlier intervention—that such legislation arises from a neurotic obsession to act against the trade union movement.

This legislation is a blow against the trade unions in Northern Ireland that have played an important role in the fight against sectarianism. I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend that, with regard to the membership ballot, issues will be brought into play that do not arise in the rest of the United Kingdom. We are all aware that the sort of sectarianism that exists in Northern Ireland does not exist on the mainland. If such membership ballots lead to people being asked whether they agree with the Anglo-Irish Agreement or for their views on the future of Northern Ireland, what good will be served? What purpose will be served if the legislation undermines the campaign that the trade unions have fought against sectarianism? That campaign has won praise from the Government. The trade unions have sought to recognise that, at the end of the day, whether one is a Catholic or Protestant, it does not matter at one's place of employment. Such legislation will undermine that campaign.

I view this order with much sadness. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will vote against it tonight. We will be defeated, but certainly when a Labour Government are returned this will be one of the first issues that will be repealed—not only in Northern Ireland but in the rest of the United Kingdom.

11.17 pm

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): It is a pleasure to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick)—short though his contributions was—on this important subject. The fact that the House is not heavily attended does not diminish the importance of the debate and importance of the contributions made.

I welcomed, and listened with interest to, the contribution of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark). He sought, in response to the speech of the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) to go to the heart of the problems that face us in Northern Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman for South Down (Mr. Powell), as my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) said, is consistent in the view that he has taken over many years, which is that legislation passed in the House should be the same for the entire United Kingdom. We accept that , as long as Norther Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom there should be some consistency in the legislation——

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): As long as.

Mr. Bell: I am glad that the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) is present. He has often taken an interest in these debates. He will be aware that in the Anglo-Irish Agreement and part of the history of Northern Ireland since 1920, is the dictum in its constitution that is shall be a part of the United Kingdom for as long as a majority of those who live in Northern Ireland wish to remain a part of the United Kingdom. It provides a possibility for the people of Northern Ireland to take a different position. That fact has been accepted and recognised by successive Governments over many years. It is a point of contention by the right hon. Member for South Down, and legitimately so, since he takes a contrary view.

We are dealing with the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1987. It came to the House and was fiercely debated in 1982 as the Employment Bill. The right hon. Member for South Down is right to say that it is rather curious that the Government have taken five years to bring it before the House. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West and my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North said, it is even more curious that it should be brought before the House as an order, with 90 minutes for debate in the dying days of the Parliament. It is quite remarkable, even though the House is not well attended, that the Government seek, with their last dying breath, to inflict a diminution of opportunities on trade unionists in Northern Ireland. That is a sad thing. It is a sad finale for the Government. Opposition Members have long believed in a fundamental shift in the balance of wealth and power to workers and their families. In the past eight years, we have seen a fundamental shift from workers and their families. By the order, the Government propose to diminish still further the rights of workers in Northern Ireland. The former Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office, the hon. Member for Brent, North (Dr. Boyson), said that outside investors in Northern Ireland considered that the labour force was co-operative, productive and of a high quality and compared favourably with that in other locations.

The hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) asked why, if it is the case that the work force is co-operative, productive, and produces work of a high quality, the industrial relations order should be inflicted upon those in the trade union movement in Northern Ireland. It is rather strange that, in such undue haste to bring the order forward, the Government are setting aside a series of statements made by Ministers in the past.

The right hon. Member for Bosworth (Sir. A. Butler), when he was Minister of State, said:

> "Northern Ireland has its own separate legislative and administrative framework of industrial relations."—[*Official Report*, 24 March 1982; Vol. 20, c. 1046.]

Why, all of a sudden, in the dying days of the Parliament, have we the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order, seeking to bring adjustments to trade union activity in Northern Ireland? That matter was brought before the House in 1982. It might be useful to point out that unions in Northern Ireland are of a different variety from those in the United Kingdom. Some unions in Northern Ireland are Great Britain-based, some are entirely Northern Ireland-based, and some are Dublin-based. How does one proceed with the punitive sequestration of assets of Dublin-based unions that fall clearly within the jurisdiction of another sovereign country? The Minister has not considered how the order, when it is enacted, as it relates to Dublin-based companies, will affect relations between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

We all know what has happened since 1982 in regard to sequestration. We discovered a lawyers' paradise that had not existed since the latter part of the 17th century. A sordid situation arose in which sequestration of union solicitors, union accountants, union bankers and union stockbrokers could be demanded. Unions had to comply with the sequestration orders or be in contempt of court. How will that apply in the future to Dublin-based unions that operate out of Dublin when there is the application of the order to their branches in Northern Ireland?

The Under-Secretary was good enough to take us through the order, but it might be as well to remind hon. Members of those gaps in interpretation that he did not touch upon. The order will provide for a compensation scheme for those dismissed for non-membership of a trade union in a closed shop between 1976 and 1982. Therefore, the order introduces an element of retrospection. We accept that the Government and the House can legislate retrospectively, but we ask whether it is wise to go back five years on a membership, a dismissal or compensation for non-membership of a trade union. Is it wise for the House to exercise its sovereign power in such a way and in such circumstances?

[Mr. Bell]

The order will also widen the grounds on which dismissal or actions short of dismissal of non-members of a trade union in a closed shop are unfair. We see this as a simple class attack on trade union rights in Northern Ireland. The trade union movement in Northern Ireland is suffering the sort of robust attack on its rights that we have seen in Great Britain since 1982. The order enables an employee to join as a party to unfair dismissal proceedings any union or other person that he claims put pressure on his employer to dismiss him. There we see again that the unions will be brought before the courts of Northern Ireland over industrial disputes which are entirely matters of relations between worker and employer. The order exacerbates generally the relations between law and trade unions and can only be detrimental to good working practices and productivity in Northern Ireland.

We accept that Government Ministers over a period of years have sought as best they can to bring investment to Northern Ireland. One of the reasons why they have brought investment to Northern Ireland has been the excellent relations between trade unionists and employers. Yet the Government, for doctrinal reasons, feel at this late stage that they ought to upset that balance between trade unionists and employers. Therefore, they are seeking to strike at trade union rights, for no other than ideological reasons, by proposing to render void any clause in a commercial contract that requires the use of union or non-union labour.

The Government continue that attack further on the abolition of certain trade union immunities. They essentially seek to subdue the work force of Northern Ireland, as they have sought to subdue the work force of Great Britain, by changing the method of computing the period of continuous employment.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West, in a spirited speech on behalf of the Labour party, decried the great animosity we have to the division that is being created in Northern Ireland between those who work there and those who employ there. He touched upon the fact, and I repeat it, that the order awakens in the hearts and minds of the British people how anti-union, anti-worker, anti-production and, in the end, anti-British the Government are when it comes to ameliorating or advancing the needs of working people. Rather, they wish to detract from those rights, often acquired over centuries of dispute, conflict and labour, and they seek to do it by stealth, by an Order in Council, late at night, on a 90-minute motion.

Again, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West touched upon the work record in Northern Ireland and the few disputes that there have been over many years. The only disputes of any note have been those local establishment disputes which were linked, if they were linked to anything at all, to militant community attitudes across the sectarian divide.

This is a serious piece of legislation with many articles. As the right hon. Member for South Down said, it repeals the Trade Disputes Act 1906 as it relates to Northern Ireland. It is outrageous that we have such a short time to discuss this order, but I certainly do not blame the Minister for that. We have no means of changing the order, even if it contains a series of errors by the parliamentary draftsman. This method of dealing with Northern Ireland legislation must be the first casualty after the general election. Whatever the decision of the electorate, this means of dealing with Northern Ireland business cannot continue.

The Minister said that it was the intention of the order to safeguard the individual from the abuse of industrial power and to improve the operation of the labour market by improving the framework of trade union law. He said that some Opposition Members would consider the order irrelevant. He is right. We consider it to be irrelevant and to add nothing to the prospects of those who work in Northern Ireland by hand or by brain, and who look to the Northern Ireland economy for their wherewithal and their future. It offers nothing to those from abroad who wish to invest in Northern Ireland. It is ideological and has no place in the House; it is not based on the experience of the Employment Act 1982, and it is redundant and should be made so. By our vote on the order we shall express the hope that at some future time it will be redundant.

11.32 pm

Mr. Viggers: By leave of the House, may I say that I have listened with interest to all that has been said? I emphasise again that the order is not an attack on trade unions. The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) and the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) said that it represents a diminution of the rights of trade unionists. I wrote down "Diminution of rights of workers in Northern Ireland." It is not at all an attack on trade unions. It provides a framework within which employers, trade unions and their members are free to act responsibly and to get on with the essential business of providing goods and services without unfair pressures.

The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West was kind enough to speak about my enthusiasm in introducing the order. I am indeed enthusiastic about the order, just as I was enthusiastic about the Employment Act 1982. It is right that the privileges enjoyed by workers in Great Britain should be extended to Northern Ireland workers. The right hon. and learned member for Warley, West and the hon. Member for Middlesbrough spoke about indecent and undue haste in introducing this legislation. This point was well answered by the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell), who said that five years could scarcely be regarded as undue haste. Negotiations have stretched over three Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland. In my post as the Minister with responsibilities for industry in Northern Ireland, I have been hoping for some months that it would be possible to introduce this order and I am happy to introduce it now.

Mr. Archer: Does the hon. Gentleman not regard an hour and a half as undue haste for legislation of this complexity?

Mr. Viggers: The time allowed for the debate is a different matter. We recognise the concerns expressed in the debate and voiced from various quarters at different times that legislation for Northern Ireland by Order-in-Council is unsatisfactory. We do not pretend that this method of legislation is perfect. For that reason, our existing procedures provide for extensive consultation in Northern Ireland and, if desired, for debate in the Northern Ireland Committee. We always seek to take careful account of any points put to us on proposals for draft legislation. Obviously, it is much easier to do that before draft orders are laid.

My first point is that more use could be made of existing procedures. That is not to say that our minds are closed to the possibility of change, but we should always remember that Orders in Council were never intended as a permanent means of legislating for Northern Ireland. During direct rule they stand in the place of measures by the Northern Ireland Assembly. We appreciate that difficulties are posed by unamendable Orders in Council. We are willing to talk about the problem to all interested parties including, of course, the Unionist parties, and to consider constructive suggestions against the background that I have described.

Let me immediately agree with the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West about the excellent industrial relations performance in Northern Ireland. It is indeed most welcome, and long may it last. However, by itself it is not an argument for failing to extend to Northern Ireland people the same rights held by workers in Great Britain; nor is an argument for failing to give protection against the possible abuse of trade union power, or the unjustified disruption of ecomomic activity. Traditionally, industrial relations legislation in Northern Ireland has followed that in the rest of the United Kingdom, and the Government see no need to depart from that policy in the present instance.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman referred to possible pernicious effects of the order. It has been argued that, as the unions in Northern Ireland have not abused their power, there is no need for the order. If there were no abuses, it is difficult to see in what respect our proposal could cause any difficulty. Others argue that the provisions of the order will be oppressive, thereby implicitly admitting that abuses occur. Those arguments reinforce my view that a legal framework is required. If there are no abuses, it will confirm the good sense of the unions in Northern Ireland. On the other hand, employers and workers will know that, if there are abuses, the order provides them with legal remiedies.

Mr. Archer: I am sorry to interrupt the Minister again, but has he not grasped the point that, if the effect of the order is to introduce into industrial relations the very sectarian divisions from which the unions have succeeded in keeping aloof, it will have a pernicious effect?

Mr. Viggers: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has made an important point. We are aware that there have been suggestions that the closed-shop balloting provisions could be used to destabilise the trade union structure and introduce a sectarian dimension. However, we do not consider that the provisions by themselves are likely to have that reult. Similar arguments have been put forward before the House on a number of occasions. During a debate on the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order in 1982, the then spokesman for the Labour party said that the provisions would give plenty of scope and encouragement to those who were intent on using worker power for sectarian purposes. The Government did not accept that argument then, and we believe that we have been proved right in the intervening five years. We do not agree that the provisions can be perverted into being used for sectarian purposes.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman made a point about the drafting of article 22*(a)* of the order. He will agree that it is not difficult to find some words of legal gobbledegook in most legislation. The drafting of the order follows that of the Employment Act 1982, and consolidates those changes into the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1976.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman, and others who have contributed to the debate, made a significant point about the distinctive position of unions in Northern Ireland. Some are based in London, some in Dublin. Of course we were aware of the different positions of unions based in the Republic of Ireland, and we could have sought to place conditions on their operation in Northern Ireland. However, the legislation does not seek to differentiate such unions from those based in the United Kingdom. They have the same rights and immunities as United Kingdom-based unions; they also have the same obligations to act responsibly and within the law.

Let me establish the facts. The vast majority of trade unions operating in Northern Ireland—there are 88—are Great Britain-based, but eight have their headquarters in Northern Ireland, and five are based in Dublin. The five Dublin-based unions have about 19,000 members, which is about 7 per cent. of the total union membership in Northern Ireland. Enforcement of Northern Ireland court judgments in the Republic will be possible when the Republic gives effect to the European convention on jurisdiction and the enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters. In practice, we do not anticipate a particular problem.

On the one hand, the right hon. and learned Gentleman made a point about indecent haste; on the other hand, the right hon. Member for South Down mentioned the long delay in introducing the order.

I have already said that Northern Ireland's industrial relations law tends to follow that of Great Britain. There have been divergencies. With a separate, albeit similar, body of legislation it is right and important to consult fully both sides of industry on the precise way ahead for the Province. In this instance, consultation has been prolonged, but the Government are now satisfied that the appropriate course of action is to replicate the provisions of the 1982 Act in Northern Ireland.

The hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) paid what I believe to be a well deserved tribute to the late Harold Binks who was a most respected leader of a white collar trade union. We recognise and respect the stand of the trade unions in Northern Ireland against sectarianism. I am entirely happy to endorse the hon. Gentleman's remaks in that respect and to reiterate and endorse the remarks of ministerial colleagues who have also referred to the point. In practice, however, the balloting provisions in this order should not provide an opportunity radically to alter the present political sectarian scene. Ballots are not compulsory. There have been relatively few in Great Britain, and I should regard it as most unlikely to find that ballots were misused for sectarian purposes.

The hon. Member for Middlesbrough made an important point about article 4 and schedule 1, which relate to compensation for closed shop dismissals between 1976 and 1982. It is erroneous to describe this as retrospective legislation. It does not declare unfair what the law then said was fair. The article does not impose any additional burden on employers or unions. The law in 1976 was that an employer could impose a closed shop and dismiss without compensation anyone who refused to join.

[Mr. Viggers]

This provision brings Northern Ireland law into line with the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in the British Rail case over the dismissal of three railway workers because of the closed shop. That was held to have been contrary to article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights—the right to free association and the right to join a trade union. In practice, we do not anticipate that there are likely to be any or many cases under this article, but the hon. Gentleman ought to respect the fact that it is right that the European Convention on Human Rights should be replicated in Northern Ireland in this way.

In conclusion, I reiterate that this order is another measure in the step by step approach to restoring the balance between the rights and responsibilities of trade unions, employers, individuals and society generally. It thus follows on from the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1982. I fully accept that both the trade union movement and employers have been successful in keeping sectarian tension away from the shop floor, and I should like to associate the Government with the tributes that have been paid to both sides of industry. I commend the order to the House.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 161, Noes 127.

Division No. 162] **[11.45 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruinvels, Peter
Budgen, Nick
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Jackson, Robert
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Portillo, Michael
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Squire, Robin
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Trotter, Neville
Viggers, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waller, Gary
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Michael Neubert.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clelland, David Gordon
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hardy, Peter
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Edward
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max

Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
O'Neill, Martin
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Matthew
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec

Tellers for the Noes
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Don Dixon.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 22nd January, be approved.

Representation of the People

11.53 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): I beg to move,

That the draft Representation of the People (Variation of Limits of Candidates' Election Expenses) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 7th May, be approved.

If the House approves the draft order, the effect will be to enable all candidates at the coming general election to increase their expenditure by 4 per cent. over existing limits. In practical terms, it will mean that spending limits in county and borough constituencies with, for example, 60,000 electors will be increased from £5,460 and £4,920 to £5,650 and £5,110 respectively.

In addition, the draft order will, if approved, increase the limits for local government elections in Great Britain, for certain elections to the City of London and for elections to ILEA and for elections by liverymen in common hall, whoever they may be.

The draft order, which was laid before the House on 7 May, is brought forward under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983. Sections 76(A) and 197(3) enable my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to vary limits on spending in parliamentary and local government elections by an amount necessary to take account of changes in the value of money which have occurred since the date when such limits were first fixed.

The statute does not empower my right hon. Friend to increase spending limits by more than that necessary to preserve the real value of the limit. The procedure prescribed by the Act is for the change to be made by order which is subject to affirmative resolution.

The current limits for parliamentary and local government elections, excluding ILEA elections, were fixed by the Representation of the People (Variation of Limits of Candidates' Election Expenses) Order on 1 March 1986. Since that time priors have risen by 4 per cent. Consequently there has arisen a general expectation that spending limits at the forthcoming general election would be increased by 4 per cent. This is a response to that.

A similar rate of increase will apply to ward elections in the City of London. However, a different rate of increase—5·6 per cent.—will apply to ILEA elections and to elections by liverymen in common hall. This will reflect the increase in prices that has occurred since 16 July 1985. *[Interruption.]* I hear hon. Members urging me to "hurry up", and hurry up I will. I hope that the changes will be acceptable to the House on the ground that they will enable us all to fight a more effective campaign.

11.56 pm

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): It has been left uncommonly late to bring this order before the House, but it *is* right that is should be brought.

I have a question for the Minister which I know he will not feel obliged to answer. As the order increases the sums that candidates may spend, will he tell us where we will get the money? We on these Benches have less ready access to funds than Conservative Members.

More seriously, I hope that one day a Home Office Minister will propose some limits on the national spending of parties, not candidates. This is a Polo order: there is a hole in the middle. Although we constrain the spending of individual candidates, we have no control over the

[Mr. Robin Corbett]

spending of national parties, urging people to vote for them. That must be a hole in the provisions we make under the Act because it is inherently unfair. Even the United States, which does not always follow our procedures, has such controls, and rightly.

We must pay attention to that because it undermines what we rightly and jointly do about the spending of individual candidates, if national parties with access to various war chests can book poster spaces and sites. It is a serious point, and I do not expect the Minister to respond to it, but I want it on the record because we should give it urgent attention.

12 midnight

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): I hope that the Minister will respond to one or two of the points that have been made, to which I should like to add my own.

Although it is sensible to have introduced this order and to index-link election expense limits in line with inflation I do not think that the order is wide enough. Although it is useful in terms of the immediate general election for the candidate to know that he or she can afford the cost of preparing three of four newsletters or election addresses to go out to their constituents, it will be difficult for some in certain parts of the country to stay within that limit and fight the sort of campaign that they would wish. One of the reasons for that is that there is a difference in weighting between the south-east and parts of the north. Printing costs are more expensive in some parts of the country than others. Those matters should be looked at.

There are other aspects of the way in which the election expense law works on which this order falls short. For instance, some parties are able to get special concessions from printers, which are then given in lieu of donations and sometimes work is done in-house. There are many examples of that.

Many hon. Members, including myself, have worked as election agents in Parliamentary and local elections. The worry of staying within election limits is something that haunts all election agents. I know that candidates always believe that they win elections and that agents are thought to lose them. The candidate gets the glory and the agent often gets a lot of the blame. There is an awful lot of worry associated with being an election agent and I should like to see tighter guidelines and detailed parameters drawn up to help agents who are trying to organise election campaigns.

We must look at other issues, of which endorsements is one. I understand that the Socialist group of the European Parliament is distributing endorsements in some constituencies that are paid for by European Parliament funds. I wonder whether that kind of endorsement will appear on people's election addresses and expenses. If not, why not, and will it be covered by the order?

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) raised the issue of national expenditure, which clearly promotes the cause of a candidate in the seat that the candidate is fighting, yet that does not have to be taken into account when drawing up the election returns that are ultimately submitted to the returning officer. One only has to think back to the 1983 election to see how vast the discrepancies between the different parties have become. The Conservative party at the last general election spent £3,558,000, of which some £62,000 was in grants to constituency campaigns. That made an effective total outside the limitation election expenses of £3,496,000. By far the largest item of expenditure of the Conservative party was advertising, much of which was in the newspapers and on hoardings. We all saw the Saatchi and Saatchi campaigns and remember the "Labour isn't working" posters. That cost the Conservative party some £2,568,000, which was not entered on individual election expenses. While we can limit the expenditure of an individual candidate to £5,650, no limit is placed on what Conservative party central office can spend on these massive advertising campaigns.

As to the Labour party, the position is not much different. It spent some £2,057,000, of which £305,000 went to local campaigns, making an unlimited total spent nationally of some £1,752,000. Expenditure on advertising by the labour party comprised £878,000 within that total. Again, that money did not have to appear on individual candidates' election expenses.

The Liberal party—I make no complaint about this because we did not have the same amount of funds—spent about £120,000, plus a donation of £245,000 from the Joseph Rowntree social service trust, of which £140,000 was earmarked for Liberal candidates. The central unlimited total was, therefore, about £225,000. That money did not have to be shown on election expense returns either.

Clearly there are major discrepancies between what parties can spend nationally and what must be shown on the election returns. It is a very unsatisfactory system, which means that some parties are more equal than others when they start at the firing line, as we are doing today. It means that those with money bags can go out and try to buy votes in a way that many of us thought went out with the Reform Act. There is also the implication that, purely because of its access to money, a party can fight a campaign which allows it to put its policies across in a more effective way than other parties, which do not have access to the same resources, although they may have exactly the same share of the popular vote.

We have a five-five-five equal share of time on television and radio during the forthcoming campaign——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. The hon. Gentleman is getting away from the order before the House, which deals specifically with the maximum amount of expenses. He must confine himself to that.

Mr. Alton: You are quite right, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In conclusion, the order is a useful small measure to help agents and candidates budget for the forthcoming election campaign but in the future we must surely turn our minds to a system of state financing, which may be the only way to ensure equality among political parties in the way in which they run their affairs and to ensure that they are not in hock to the paymasters who seem to call the tune at present.

12.6 am

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I must confess that I find the bellyaching of the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) singularly unattractive. He began by complaining that the alliance did not have enough money to embark on a national campaign last time around. He spoke of the Liberal party having about a quarter of a million pounds, but he neglected to say that between them the alliance parties, if such they be, spent between £1·4 million and £1·5 million. It might have been more helpful if he had given the House the correct figure. *[Interruption.]* It is no use the hon. Gentleman waving his hands in a deprecatory way. He should have given the correct figure, but he did not.

The problem arose only in 1974 when one party started the programme of national campaigns in the *Daily Express* at a cost of £25,000. And which party was that? It was the Liberal party. Yet now the Liberals come whining to the House making the kind of unattractive speech that we have just heard from the hon. Member for Mossley Hill. It is worse than that. "Oh dear," said the hon. Gentleman, "the limits are not high enough—we shall not be able to buy the kind of campaign that we want and our agents will have difficulty keeping within the spending limits." It seems that it is, after all, rather a rich party, committed to buying a campaign.

Mr. Alton *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: No, the hon. Gentleman will have to listen for a change. When I examined the figures I also discovered that in the constituencies that they won the Liberals spent 87 per cent. of the maximum allowed, which was the highest spending of any of the parties. The complaints of the hon. Member for Mossley Hill are therefore unattractive and should not have been made.

Question put and agreed to.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

Resolved,

That the draft Representation of the People (Variation of Limits of Candidates' Election Expenses) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 7th May, be approved.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c).

NORTHERN IRELAND

Resolved,

That the draft Occupiers' Liability (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 2nd April, be approved.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Question agreed to.

PETITION

Drink Driving

12.8 am

Mr. Martin Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): At a late hour on this day and in the lifetime of this Parliament, I beg leave to present to the House a petition initiated in my constituency and signed by 5,000 people broadly throughout the country.

The petitioners do not ask for draconian or killjoy legislation but for a simple, common-sense approach to one aspect of our laws on drinking and driving which makes a travesty of natural justice. They petition

> "Wherefore your Petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable House do make an amendment to the present law pertaining to the Drink/Driving Offences; Whereby enabling hospital blood samples to be permissible evidence in a Court of Law if so requested by the Police."

What they ask is reasonable, and I hope that during the life of the next Parliament it will be seriously considered, and, I sincerely hope, granted.

To lie upon the Table.

Mrs. B. Dawson (Compensation Claim)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

12.10 am

Mr. Rob Hayward (Kingswood): I raise this evening the subject of the Status of Forces agreement 1951 as it relates to my constituent, Mrs. Dawson, and four other constituents of mine.

This is the first occasion during this Parliament on which I have had the opportunity to raise an Adjournment debate, and, throughout this Parliament, I could not be regarded as having gone over the top or been unduly aggressive about raising problems with Ministers. However, I believe that there has been a substantial miscarriage of justice in this case, which stems, apparently, from an agreement that was originally introduced in 1951. That was followed by a mixture of what I believe has been disinterest and incompetence in a number of places, resulting in what can most generously be described as minuscule offers of compensation to the individuals concerned.

On 3 April last year, Mrs. Dawson and four children —Philip Sinclair and Karl, Sara and Emma Boughey— were walking along a road in Germany that is classified as civilian territory. Three of the children are children of a REME officer, and the other two are civilians. While walking along the road they were hit by shrapnel from a shell fired by American forces, which had overshot a range by about 3·5 km.

All five of the individuals concerned suffered varying degrees of injuries. Emma, the most seriously injured, was rushed to a German hospital in Hanover university, and, a year later, she still has shrapnel—it passed through her skull—embedded in her brain. That shrapnel will stay there, certainly until adulthood, and possibly for the rest of her life. Mrs. Dawson suffered injuries to the back of the neck which have damaged her nervous system and have resulted in her having to spend four more days in Frenchay hospital—a local general hospital in Bristol— some 12½ months after the accident.

Philip Sinclair has scarring to the legs and foot which resulted from the shrapnel hitting his foot and having to be removed. Like Mrs. Dawson, he is still not clear of full medical treatment, and it is likely that he will suffer intermittent pains and need treatment for the rest of his life.

After the incident of 3 April, which took place on civilian territory and was not my constituents' fault, they were visited a day later by a brigade commander of the Berlin brigade of the United States forces—one General Griffin—whose urgent visit to four of the five patients in hospital showed the seriousness with which the United States forces appeared to take the case. The family was told, then and on other occasions, that they would not want for anything as a result of the accident. That, however, does not appear to be the case 13 months later.

The case was then dealt with by British Army of the Rhine legal officers, and my constituents have no complaints about the medical advice or assistance that they received from the British forces, or about the legal advice that they were given — until November. In November, Mrs. Dawson and Philip Sinclair decided, as civilians, to employ a German lawyer who is a specialist in this area, and took the case on themselves. After a few months they received offers of compensation, which may or may not include sums for pain and suffering, of 3,400 deutschmarks and just over 3,000 deutschmarks respectively—the equivalent of about £1,100 and £1,000—for loss of earnings, travel expenses, clothing, telephone calls and the rest. It is clear that, for Philip Sinclair, the offer is exclusive of any compensation for pain and suffering because the German lawyer has said that there is no such concept in German law.

The family came to me to discuss the offer. Anyone who knows the injuries that have been suffered would be amazed to learn that they have been offered £1,100 and £1,000. I took the case up and asked for an urgent Adjournment debate because we understand that the family has to make a decision by 30 May to enable their German laywer to act. There was also the prospect of a general election being called.

During the past 10 days, I have written to the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office to draw their attention to the case. I have also attempted to draw the details of the case to the attention of what I might call agencies of the United States. I started off with the embassy and the defence attaché. I was transferred to the public affairs office, then to the judge advocate general at Burtonwood in Cheshire, to the public affairs office there, back to the defence attaché at the embassy, to the public affairs department there, to the defence attaché, to the political military attaché, back to Burtonwood, back to the embassy and finally to Mildenhall on Friday.

With only one exception, I have had to instigate all of those telephone calls. On Friday, I received a telephone call from Burtonwood advising me to contact Mildenhall, but the senior officer to whom I was supposed to speak was not available. I waited for a telephone call this morning for three and a half working hours, at which point I telephoned Mildenhall. I was then referred back to the embassy.

Out of courtesy, I advised the United States ambassador's office this morning that I intended to complain about the response that I had received from the US forces and the embassy. I have received some response, but what is the net effect? I have been referred to Mannheim.

This is the result of the efforts of a Member of Parliament. What can one expect an ordinary British citizen to achieve when faced with such an impossible task? I cannot imagine that any British citizen would have had any reasonable success.

Several questions must be asked, the first of which concerns the Status of Forces agreement. The family have consistently been told that the agreement must apply to all five. They are therefore bound by an agreement that was signed in 1951. I cannot imagine that it was then envisaged that people who suffered as a result of an error by a member of the American forces would receive such minimal compensation.

I am sure that my constituents would have been offered not £1,000 but tens of thousands of pounds in Britain and hundreds of thousands of pound in the United States. That is particularly the position of Emma Boughey, who received an offer of compensation this morning. The offer has been made to her parents because she is still a minor. She has shrapnel embedded in her brain, and if it moves as she continues to grow and her skull enlarges it could result in her becoming paraplegic for the rest of her life. However, she has been offered only 17,000 deutschmarks, which is about £5,600. Is it realistic to expect any family to accept £5,600 in circumstances in which it may find in about 10 years that its daughter becomes paraplegic? We do not know that that will happen, but the medical advice will not become clear for 10 years. Throughout that time the parents and the rest of the family have the worry over what might or might not happen and the costs that they will be faced with for the rest of Emma's, Karl's and Sara's lives. The offers in respect of Karl and Emma have been confirmed today as being 1,000 and 2,000 deutschmarks respectively.

I do not believe that the Status of Forces agreement was ever intended to result in this gross anomaly of justice for these five British citizens. Therefore, I ask whether it is the intention that such circumstances should arise, especially when these people were not anywhere near the range from which the shell was fired. The shell overshot the range by 3·5 km as they were walking on German civilian territory, so there are implications for others who are on holiday in Germany and in other countries where the agreement applies, which means all NATO countries.

Can it really be that the American forces are able to hide behind the agreement, especially when a commitment was made, as understood by the family, by the brigade commander, the senior officer responsible for such action, that it would want for nothing as a result of the accident that had occurred? I remind the House that the brigade commander took extreme action by arriving at the hospital one day after the accident happened. That was a clear sign of the seriousness with which he viewed the matter.

There is an apparent contradiction in whether pain and suffering is a concept that applies in German law. The letters that the family has received in respect of Philip Sinclair state specifically that there is no such allowance in German law. The implication in the letter that Mrs. Dawson has received is similar. If that is the position, what is the nature of the offer that has been made to Emma Boughey of about 17,000 deutschmarks? As I understand it, the costs associated with her case do not amount to that sum, so it would seem that within that total there is a concept of pain and suffering. If that is so, that further highlights my view and that of the family that it has been offered a ridiculously minuscule sum.

In the brief period that I have been in contact with the family I have made my best efforts on its behalf. Over the previous 13 months it has made exceptional efforts to pursue its case, that have resulted in a small offer of compensation. I would ask my hon. Friend the Minister whether he, with me, will make a plea to the United States ambassador for him to intervene in this matter to ensure that there is justice and due deserts for the family, which comprises ordinary British citizens who seem not to have secured natural justice.

12.24 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on bringing this unfortunate case to the attention of the House. I commend my hon. Friend on the considerable action that he has taken in the short time that he has been involved in what is, by any standards, a complex and complicated case.

May I first extend my sympathy to Mrs. Dawson, her nephew and grandchildren and wish them a speedy recovery. I was sorry to learn that the effects of the accident will remain with some of them for a very long time. My hon. Friend has referred to the 1951 Status of Forces agreement and, by inference, to the 1959 supplementary agreement relating to foreign forces stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany. I must say to my hon. Friend that I am not sure that the 1951 agreement is as relevant to this case as my hon. Friend thinks. That is because paragraph *5(a)* of article VIII of the 1951 Status of Forces agreement sets out the general principle that:

> "Claims shall be filed, considered and settled or adjudicated in accordance with the laws and regulations of the receiving state with respect to claims arising from the authorities of its own armed forces."

The effect of that article is that where United States forces are responsible for an accident in the Federal Republic of Germany, the victims' remedy is governed by German law, in the German courts, as if German forces had been responsible.

In correspondence my hon. Friend raised the question whether the 1951 Status of Forces agreement applies to "civilian German territory," but it is not germane. As far as claims are concerned, the 1951 Status of Forces agreement applies to acts or omissions by the armed forces of one member state in the performance of official duties in the territory of another member state. One may assume, therefore, that the 1951 Status of Forces agreement applies whether the shell landed within or outside a military area. NATO could not function and train effectively without such an agreement. The 1951 Status of Forces agreement does not lay down scales of compensation, but provides a forum in which claims are settled. As I have said, it provides that claims should be dealt with by the host Government regardless of which NATO force was involved in the incident. The existence of the 1951 Status of Forces agreement does not, therefore, in itself, adversely affect the claimants in this case. Indeed it removes from the claimant the need to embark on the possibly lenghty and costly process of having to establish who is responsible for what and where.

I agree that in this case there was no such dispute, but if there had been such a dispute the benefit of the agreement would be obvious. In this instance liability has not been disputed, the claims have been dealt with by the claims office of the city of Luneburg and a formal offer of compensation has been made.

My hon. Friend has made it clear that he does not regard that offer as acceptable. My hon. Friend stated that there is some dispute about the extent to which the compensation offered covered pain and suffering. The Foreign Office is not in a position to offer legal advice, but is so far as it has been able to study the documents, it appears that both the letters from the claims office to Mrs. Dawson's German lawyer and the lawyer's letters to Mrs. Dawson show that the question of pain and suffering was taken into account. Of the sum offered to Philip Sinclair, approximately five sixths were for pain and suffering. In Mrs. Dawson's case it appears that the claims office considered that a final estimate for pain and suffering was not possible as her treatment had not been completed. However, of the total offered to her almost half is a provisional award for pain and suffering, which has already been paid.

My hon. Friend has described the offers of settlement as minuscule. I understand the considerations that have led him to use that word, but it is up to the claimants to

[Mr. Tim Eggar]

decide whether to accept or reject these out-of-court settlements. In this respect, the German legal system is no different from the British or indeed, American systems. Indeed, the claims office in Luneburg has made it clear that, if the claimants wish to dispute the settlements offered, they should sue the Federal Republic of Germany in the appropriate court, within two months of receiving notice of the settlement.

I do not wish in any way to underestimate the circumstances of this most unfortunate accident and the traumatic effect on the victims. However, Mrs. Dawson and Philip Sinclair are not dependants of a serving member of Her Majesty's forces, nor were members of Her Majesty's forces involved in this incident. This case, therefore, in its essentials, is a civil claim for damages and is not a matter for the Ministry of Defence. Nor is it for Her Majesty's Government to comment on the adequacy or otherwise of any particular offer of settlement, nor do Her Majesty's Government have any standing to intervene in the legal process. Our advice in all such cases is that the aggrieved party or parties should seek local expert legal advice. Mrs. Dawson has already done so and her lawyer has given her his advice. Therefore, it is for Mrs. Dawson and the parents of Philip Sinclair to decide, perhaps after further consultation with the lawyer, whether to go ahead with litigation. I must emphasise that that matter is, and can only be a private decision.

My hon. Friend has also asked whether the United States forces have any responsibility to provide compensation over and above any offer of settlement made by the German authorities or compensation that might be obtained by legal proceedings. I am sorry to have to tell my hon. Friend that United States forces have no such responsibility. Under the terms of the 1951 agreement, they are responsible only for reimbursing the Federal German authorities 75 per cent. of the compensation that is actually awarded either out of court or as a result of court action. My hon. Friend also referred to statements said to have been made by General Griffin of the United States Army. That is a matter for the General, and I do not think that there is any comment that I can make on it. I will ensure that the record of the debate is passed on to the United States ambassador in London. I will make sure that his attention is drawn to my hon. Friend's remarks.

On the sums offered to the Boughey children, they are dependants of a serving member of Her Majesty's forces. Their awards are provisional and are subject to further negotiations between the British Army of the Rhine legal service and the relevant German authorities. Of course, BAOR is involved in the case because the children are dependants.

I am sure, that my hon. Friend would wish to join me in an expression of thanks to the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany for their prompt action immediately after the accident. A group of German soldiers who were nearby gave immediate first aid and drove Mrs. Dawson, her nephew and grandchildren to a nearby military medical centre and from there by German military ambulance to the district hospital at Soltau where her nephew and two of her grandchildren underwent surgery. The third grandchild was flown by German military helicopter to the university clinic at Hanover. As a result of that prompt action all the British citizens involved were treated for their injuries with a minimum of delay.

Although I fully understand and, indeed, sympathise with my hon. Friend's concern for his constituents following this most unfortunate incident, I am afraid that I must emphasise that Mrs. Dawson and the parents of Philip Sinclair can seek redress only through the German legal process. The decision whether to pursue litigation against the German state must remain one for the family, in consultation with its German lawyer. Much as I regret it, Her Majesty's Government have no standing to intervene in the process.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-six minutes to One o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 12 May 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BILLS (SUSPENSION)

Ordered,

That—

(1) the Promoters of every Private Bill which has originated in this House or has been brought from the House of Lords in the present Session of Parliament shall have leave to suspend any further proceeding thereon in order to proceed with that Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session;

(2) the Agent for the Promoters of any such Bill intending to suspend any further proceeding thereon shall give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than five o'clock on Thursday of their intention to suspend further proceeding thereon, or, if the Bill, having passed this House, is then pending in the House of Lords, of their intention to proceed with the same Bill in this House in the next Session: provided that all fees due upon any such Bill up to that day be paid;

(3) a list of all such Bills, with a statement of the stage at which they have been suspended, shall be prepared by the Clerks in the Private Bill Office and printed;

(4) every such Bill which has originated in this House shall be presented to the House not later than the third day on which the House sits after the next meeting of Parliament;

(5) there shall be deposited with every Bill so presented a declaration signed by the Agent for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill with respect to which proceedings have been suspended at the last stage of its proceeding in this House in the present Session;

(6) every Bill so presented shall be laid by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the Table of the House on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the causes of Her Majesty's calling the Parliament have been declared thereunto;

(7) every Bill so laid on the Table shall be deemed to have been read the first time and (if the Bill has been read a second time before its suspension) to have been read a second time and—

> (i) if such Bill has been referred to the Committee on Unopposed Bills in the present Session, it shall stand so referred;
>
> (ii) if such Bill has been referred to an opposed Committee during the present Session and not reported by that Committee to the House, the Bill shall be committed and
>
> *(a)* all Petitions against the Bill which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session; and
>
> *(b)* any minutes of evidence taken before the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;
>
> (iii) if such Bill has been reported by any Committee, it shall be ordered to be read the third time unless it has been reported with Amendments in the present Session and has not been considered as so amended, in which case it shall be ordered to lie upon the Table: provided that if any New Clause has been added on consideration of a Bill as amended in a previous Session such Bill shall be ordered to lie upon the Table with that Clause;
>
> (iv) if such Bill has been read the third time before its suspension, it shall be deemed to have been read the third time;

(8) paragraph (2) of Standing Order 166 relating to Private Business (First reading) shall not apply to any Bill brought from the House of Lords in the next Session and upon which the proceedings have been suspended in this House in the present Session;

(9) when any Bill which has been brought from the House of Lords in the present Session, and upon which the proceedings have been suspended in this House, is brought from the House of Lords in the next Session, the Agent for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration, signed by him, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the House of Lords in the present Session and, as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office that such a declaration has been so deposited has been laid upon the table of the House—

> (i) unless the Examiner has reported pursuant to Standing Order 74 relating to Private Business (Examination of bills brought from House of Lords, etc.), the Bill shall stand referred to the Examiners;
>
> (ii) if the Examiner has so reported, the Bill shall be ordered to be read a second time, or, if it has been read a second time, it shall be read a second time and committed; but
>
> (iii) if the Bill has been reported by a Committee with Amendments in the present Session it shall be committed to the Chairman of Ways and Means who shall make only such Amendments to the Bill as have been made thereto by the Committee in the present Session, and shall report the Bill to the House forthwith, and the Bill shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

(10) where a Bill has been brought from the House of Lords in the present Session and the period prescribed by paragraph (1) of Standing Order 171A relating to Private Business (Petitions against private bills) has not elapsed before Friday, any Petition presented during the present Session in pursuance of that Standing Order shall be void, and the period of time prescribed by that Standing Order shall apply to any Bill brought from the Lords in the next Session in pursuance of this Order;

(11) any Bill which under the provisions of this Order is deemed to have been read the first time, or the first and second time, or the first second, and third time, shall be recorded in the Journal of the House as having been so read;

(12) without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph (7) of this Order, only those Petitions against any Bill which stood referred to the Committee on the Bill and which have not been withdrawn or have been deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business (Reference to committee of petitions against bill) shall stand referred to the Committee on the same Bill in the next Session;

(13) in relation to any Bill to which this Order applies Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business (Right of audience before committees on opposed bills) shall have effect as if the words "under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against bill)" were omitted;

(14) where any Standing Orders have been dispensed with in respect of any private Bill in the present Session or in the last Session, those Standing Orders shall be deemed to have been ordered to be dispensed with in respect of any such Bill presented or brought from the Lords in pursuance of this Order;

(15) any Standing Orders complied with in respect of any Bill originating in the House of Lords upon which the proceedings have been suspended in that House shall be deemed to have been complied with in respect of such Bill if the same is brought from the House of Lords in the next Session, and any notices published or given and any deposits made in respect of such Bill for the present Session shall be held to have been published, given and made, respectively, for the Bill so brought from the House of Lords in the next Session.

(16) no further fees shall be charged in respect of proceedings on a Bill in respect of which fees have been incurred in the present Session.

That this Order be a Standing Order of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

To be communicated to the Lords.

Oral Answers to Questions

EMPLOYMENT

Job Club Programme

1. **Mr. Adley** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the job club programme.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): Job clubs are a very effective means of helping longer term unemployed people back to work. Sixty per cent. of those who leave job clubs go into jobs, and 13 per cent. find places on the community programme, a training course or the enterprise allowance scheme. In order to build on this success we have recently expanded the number of job clubs to 1,000 and are opening a further 300 by September. This will enable around 175,000 people to enter job clubs this year.

Mr. Adley: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply and note, as usual, the sneering comments from the Opposition Front Bench. Will my hon. Friend accept from me that the job clubs in Christchurch and Ferndown in my constituency already fulfil a valuable role in bringing together people who want to find work and employers who are looking for staff? Will he please be encouraged to continue with the scheme and let the Government give it every possible consideration and support?

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend is right. Job clubs are an excellent concept. The progress being made in Christchurch and Ferndown by the job clubs there augurs well for the future. I wish that Opposition Members had visited their local job clubs to see the good work that is being done. Perhaps they are at the job clubs already, because I suggest that after 11 June many will be using job clubs for real.

Mr. Madden: Will the Minister explain why the Manpower Services Commission has been paying £37,000 a year to a luxury hotel in Bradford to house two temporary job clubs, when last week the MSC announced that it was going to withdraw a smaller amount of money from Fashion Services for the Disabled, which allows disabled people to play a more active part in the community, and that in December this year it will withdraw an even smaller amount of money from the Bradford Playspace scheme, which provides poor children with holidays that they would not otherwise receive and some activity for 40,000 poor children in Bradford? Will the Minister ask the chairman of the MSC to reverse those heartless decisions?

Mr. Lee: I cannot comment on the project that the hon. Gentleman is talking about. Job clubs are a very effective concept. The total cost of a job club is about £23,000 per annum and, given the success rate of getting people into jobs, it is extremely good value for money.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: I confirm every word that my hon. Friend the Minister has said about the efficacy of job clubs. The one in my constituency, which we are very glad to have, has an immensely positive attitude. It is extremely well run and the atmosphere is very good. Many people go on to immediate employment, or very shortly thereafter get jobs.

Mr. Lee: I am grateful to have the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster (Mrs. Kellett-Bowman). I have not visited the Lancaster job club, but I have seen 15 or 20 on my visits round the country. They are an excellent concept, and one finds that the individuals are motivated to look for work.

Ms. Clare Short: The Minister is right that job clubs are popular, because they assist a very small minority of people and give them intensive help in obtaining a job. Does he not understand that, as the numbers of job clubs grow, the percentage of those getting jobs will fall, because the problem is not that people do not know how to look for jobs, but that there are not enough jobs available? Under this Government, since 1979 1·6 million jobs have been destroyed in the British economy. Is it not time for the Department of Employment to concentrate on developing jobs and solving unemployment, rather than developing schemes and ways of fiddling figures to create a camouflage over the jobs problem?

Mr. Lee: The hon. Lady talks about small numbers. I repeat that this year about 175,000 people will pass through job clubs. There is no indication that the numbers of those who go into employment are reducing. The 60 per cent. figure is a national average, and some job clubs have figures well above that.

Mr. Stanbrook: Is my hon. Friend aware that I have visited the Orpington job club and found it to be of inestimable value to the local unemployed, ending their sense of isolation and giving them practical help in the process of getting fresh jobs?

Mr. Lee: Once again, I appreciate my hon. Friend's support in talking about his experience of the job club in his area.

Labour Statistics

2. **Mr. Jack Thompson** asked the Paymaster General what is his latest estimate of the net loss of full-time jobs and net gain in part-time jobs since 1979.

The Paymaster General and Minister for Employment (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): We estimate that between June 1979 and December 1986 full-time employment in Great Britain decreased by 1,359,000 and part-time employment increased by 719,000. Since 1983, however, the total employed labour force has grown by 1,130,000.

Mr. Thompson: Is it not a fact that, even now, full-time jobs throughout the country are disappearing? Yesterday, the written answer to my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) showed that in the northern region, for instance, in 1986, which is a comparable figure for any year from 1979, there were more than 19,000 redundancies. Does not the introduction and development of part-time jobs take away from the employee the rights of national insurance, unfair dismissal and wage protection?

Mr. Clarke: No. The hon. Gentleman's first assertion is definitely not a fact. He quotes figures for redundancies, and, unfortunately, some redundancies are still occurring. However, the rate at which jobs are now being created is exceeding the rate at which jobs are being lost. We have a process of industrial change and industrial revival. I am glad to say that, given that unemployment has now been falling strongly for eight months, it has been falling most strongly in the northern region.

Mr. Thurnham: Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the work done by the action for jobs team is to be welcomed? Could he arrange a new date for the team to visit Bolton? When the team does come, will it persuade Bolton council to let common sense prevail and stop its boycott of the new job training scheme?

Mr. Clarke: We find that the action for jobs programme is welcomed by those to whom it is presented, and I am delighted to say that when we present the full range of policies to local people up and down the country we get a much increased level of involvement from employers, local people and local authorities in helping us to deliver the schemes. I hope that the local authority abandons its ridiculous objection to the job training scheme. It is a pity that, in this pre-election mood, parts of the Labour party and the Trades Union Congress appear to be opposed to extending training to the unemployed. I trust that common sense will ultimately prevail.

Mr. Prescott: Does the Paymaster General accept— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Why is there such a sense of excitement about all this today?

Mr. Prescott: Does the Paymaster General — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This all takes a lot of time.

Mr. Prescott: Does the Paymaster General accept that his announcement that every two full-time jobs lost since 1979 have been replaced by one part-time job is a searing indictment of eight years of this Government, who were elected to reduce, not treble, unemployment, and a further example of the fraudulent claims of Tory election promises? Can he now tell the House whether he accepts the common assessment that if the policies continue we will see more reductions of full-time manufacturing jobs, to be replaced by more part-time, low-paid, low-skill, skivvy employment schemes?

Mr. Clarke: I do not agree with that. The figures from 1979, of course, take account of the enormous job losses that took place in the recession of 1979, 1980 and 1981.

Mr. Prescott: Which the Government created.

Mr. Clarke: No. A combination of international conditions and the policies of the previous Labour Government were responsible for that. It is absurd for the Opposition to ignore the fact that there has been a steady increase in the number of jobs in the British economy, since 1983 in particular.

Ms. Clare Short: Part-time, low-paid jobs.

Mr. Clarke: It is not true that they are part-time and low-paid. Between June 1983 and December 1986 there has been an increase of more than 250,000 full-time jobs; the number of part-time jobs has increased by more than 400,000; and the number of self-employed positions has increased by nearly 500,000. The Opposition are trying hopelessly to distort the figures by going back to 1979 to deny the strong recovery.

Mr. Holt: Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the picture painted by the hon. Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Thompson) of the north of England is completely out of kilter? Only today Nissan has announced that it is taking on 300 additional workers, and the National Coal Board has announced, for the first time for many years, that it is to take on 500 apprentices in the coal industry. We need no lessons from any Opposition Member about how well we are doing in the north of England.

Mr. Clarke: The Government are supporting that by putting money into the new northern development companies, setting up new urban development corporations, establishing new inner city task forces in the most depressed parts of the region and supporting a new spirit of enterprise and initiative, which is producing results in the northern region.

Training Schemes (Liverpool)

4. **Mr. Alton** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the success rate of training schemes in Liverpool.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): The Government spent over £26 million in 1986-87 on a wide range of training schemes in Liverpool to enable young people and adults to acquire the skills that they need to compete for jobs. Well over half of those leaving YTS between March and September 1986 entered work or further training. Sixty-six per cent. of those leaving the job training scheme between April and October 1986 entered work or further training, and 74 per cent. of people leaving training for enterprise courses in the period April to October 1986 entered work, 58 per cent. of them in a self-employed capacity.

Mr. Alton: Is the Minister aware that a Liverpool university survey showed that one third of all school leavers on Merseyside failed to find a job and that 60 per cent., as the Minister said, entered training schemes? Is it not therefore important that the quality of those schemes is maintained? Does he agree that schemes like that run by the North Liverpool Music Resource Centre have brought training schemes into some disrepute? While I thank the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment, the hon. Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee), who has helped to ensure the quality of that scheme and the prospects for the young people involved in it, does the Minister agree that it is important, if schemes are to be successful, that quality must be maintained and the people who run the schemes must be above the claims of disrepute that have been thrown around?

Mr. Trippier: I agree that we are searching for quality in all our schemes, particularly YTS and JTS. I would have thought that the hon. Gentleman would start by referring to the figures that I gave in my substantive answer, although perhaps that is asking too much. However, I am sure he would agree that they are impressive. The percentage of those finding work, as a result of taking advantage of the schemes, is very high. There is no difference between the hon. Gentleman and the Government on the matter of quality.

Mr. Squire: On the specific point about Liverpool, has my hon. Friend seen any sign of an increase in applications from ex-Militant Labour councillors for training places?

Mr. Trippier: Certainly in my region, the north-west region, we have seen a considerable number of applications from those Militants to be parliamentary candidates at the forthcoming election. We shall make hay of that come election day.

Tourism

6. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Paymaster General what information he has on the amount of income that has been generated by tourism in the East Midlands tourist board area in each year since 1978.

Mr. Trippier: In the East Midlands tourist board area, spending increased from £145 million in 1978 to over £375 million in 1985.

A table giving full information has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Bruinvels: As Leicester currently has an under-developed potential as a major tourist area, it is not surprising that it still needs those grants. As I intend to be re-elected, may I ask my hon. Friend to ensure that Leicester receives the full status of a tourism development action programme area? That would bring additional jobs to the area and ensure that the 1·5 million jobs in the tourist industry would be increased, particularly in Leicester.

Mr. Trippier: After all the hard work that he has done, I am quite certain that my hon. Friend will be re-elected. As we all know, he is a very assiduous and able advocate for his constituents.

My hon. Friend asked about the tourist development action programme. It is for the English Tourist Board to decide, but I can tell him that it welcomes applications of that kind.

Ms. Richardson: Is the Minister aware that women, including women in the east midlands, who represent two thirds of hotel and catering workers are being paid poverty wages? Full-time workers receive just over £80 a week and part-time workers receive £2·03 an hour. In view of the very high profits in the tourist industry—and we are not sorry about those profits—does the Minister agree that it is about time that some of those profits were directed towards the low-paid?

Mr. Trippier: It is important that the hon. Lady is heard loud and clear not to be knocking the tourist industry or the jobs in it. That is the last thing that we want when we are trying to raise its status.

The hon. Lady referred to low pay. That is precisely the reason why, when we were considering the Wages Bill, now an Act of Parliament, that we decided to retain wages council protection. She obviously welcomes that protection, as do many Conservative Members, for those aged 21 and over.

Job Release Scheme

7. **Mr. Knox** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a further statement on ~~the~~ operation of the job release scheme.

Mr. Lee: The job release scheme enables older workers to retire early with an allowance on the condition that their employers agree and replace them with people who are unemployed.

At the end of March, 24,000 people were supported under job release.

Mr. Knox: Does my hon. Friend agree that the job release scheme is one of the best schemes for alleviating the present unemployment, in that it does not involve commitments when we return to full employment? Does he further agree that not nearly enough people are involved in it and that it should be expanded?

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend is right. It is an excellent scheme, and I am grateful for the constructive interest that he has taken in it. Expansion of the scheme would be expensive, but obviously all our schemes are under constant review.

Mr. Evans: Will the Minister confirm that the job release scheme enjoys all-party support and is popular with employers and with those who participate in it? Can he explain why the Tory Government cut this scheme, and will he acknowledge, as his hon. Friend said, that the scheme should be increased and improved, not reduced?

Mr. Lee: Over the years there have been a number of changes in the job release scheme and, if I remember correctly, some of them took place under the Labour Government. It is an excellent scheme, and I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman draws on the whole range of organisations that support it. As regards further expansion, as I have said, it is an expensive scheme; but I repeat that all these schemes are kept under review. I have heard what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Mr. Harris: While agreeing that this is an excellent scheme, and hoping that Ministers in their review will look at the payments made to people who take advantage of it, may I ask my hon. Friend whether he is aware that there is some bitterness among people who have taken advantage of it, because payments have not increased in line with inflation? Will he please look again at this important point?

Mr. Lee: We take that into account when we adjust the rates of allowance, and that is normally done annually. We also take into account the tax aspects, because some of the allowances are taxable whereas, others are tax free.

Tourism (Job Creation)

8. **Mr. Eadie** asked the Paymaster General how many jobs he estimates will be created by tourism in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The Government do not produce forecasts of future employment levels, which depend on many factors. However, if present trends in tourism continue, I would expect to see further significant growth in employment in 1987.

Mr. Eadie: Does the Minister agree that there would be more job creation in the tourist industry if the Government implemented the Select Committee's suggestion in its report of extending the tourist season? That could be done at low cost, or even negative cost. Does he further agree that the refusal to do this could only be interpreted as a sort of doctrinaire approach, because it would assist the regions in their job creation efforts?

Mr. Trippier: I agree that it is important that we should do all that we can to extend the tourist season. In fact, we responded positively to that when the Select Committee report came out. The hon. Gentleman should be careful not to quote too much from that report, because if we had implemented all it, recommendations, that would have been disadvantageous to Scotland.

Mr. Butterfill: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Government have done a great deal to extend the season by encouraging especially business tourism and conference trade, and that the contribution of that to employment has been largely underestimated by Opposition Members? Does he share my hope that they will change their attitude in the next Parliament?

Mr. Trippier: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. In fact, one of the conditions that we have introduced alongside section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969 is that those who apply for the grant should devise means whereby they can extend the tourist season.

Mrs. Clwyd: Does the Minister agree that many extra jobs would be created in tourism in Wales if the Welsh Tourist Board was able to advertise itself directly overseas as its Scottish equivalent does? Does he agree also that the promotion of Wales overseas should not be left to the British Tourist Authority? Will he urge the Government to bring forward the necessary legislation to enable that to happen?

Mr. Trippier: That would mean that Wales would get two bites at the cherry, because the principal job and responsibility of the British Tourist Authority is to bang the drum abroad and encourage inward tourism to the United Kingdom. The Welsh Tourist Board does have an opportunity from time to time to exhibit with the BTA at various exhibitions. I am certainly not averse to the hon. Lady's suggestion. However, I must point out to her that the principal responsibility for that must rest with the BTA.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: As my hon. Friend knows, the office of the East Midlands tourist board is in Lincoln, which is quite right, because Lincoln is the most historic and beautiful city in the region. Does he agree that, given imagination, professionalism and co-operation between the public sector and private enterprise, many thousands of jobs could be created by the proper development of the eastern tourist group of Cambridge, Peterborough, Lincoln, York and Durham, and that all of us should give our minds to developing that?

Mr. Trippier: I endorse what my hon. Friend has said and agree with him completely that the headquarters of the East Midlands tourist board is in the right location. We are trying to encourage areas further north of Watford to make application under section 4, given the new policy, so that we can try to assist the dispersal of tourists away from London and the south-east.

Mr. Pike: The Minister, who has some knowledge of the north-west region, will know that the north-west is developing tourism. Everyone will welcome jobs in that area. However, does he accept that that is only scratching at the surface of the 300,000 people who have been thrown out of work in the manufacturing sector and the 32 per cent. reduction in jobs in that sector since the Government came to power?

Mr. Trippier: I love the back-handed compliment that the hon. Gentleman pays me by saying that I have some knowledge of the north-west. I was born, brought up and have lived there all my life. I dare say that I might know it better than he does.

On tourism, again I caution Opposition Members not to be so quick in rubbishing this industry. I cannot find another sector of the British economy that is showing such an increase in wealth and job creation. That should not be discouraged. The hon. Gentleman knows very well that in manufacturing, in which we are seeing an increase in profitability the like of which we have not seen for a long time, it is possible for many companies to take on 10 per cent. more work without taking on one more person. We must look to the sectors that will produce the jobs.

Mr. Gale: Does my hon. Friend, agree that job creation in tourism owes a great deal to sensitive developments? Will he congratulate and further encourage the English Tourist Board in its efforts to promote environmentally acceptable and international standard projects?

Mr. Trippier: Yes, I do. I am glad to have this opportunity to pay a warm tribute to my hon. Friend, who has specialised in this since he was elected to this House, and I am sure that he will continue to specialise in it in the next Parliament.

Northern Region

9. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Paymaster General how many people found work in the northern region in the first quarter of 1987.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Government have no means of knowing exactly how many people find work in any given period. But between 9 January and 6 March 1987, 23,600 people in the northern region were placed in jobs by jobcentres alone, and we estimate that jobcentres account for only about a quarter of all engagements.

Mr. Fallon: Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm, before any electioneering starts, that more than 1 million people are in paid employment in the north-east, which is 29,000 more than in 1983, that self-employment has increased by 16,000 since then and that unemployment is falling fastest in the northern region?

Mr. Clarke: I would happily confirm that, both before and during the election period which is upon us. I am glad to say that the position seems likely to be sustained, because the number of unfilled vacancies at jobcentres in the region has increased by 24 per cent. on a year ago and our jobcentres are placing 12 per cent. more people in jobs than they were a year ago.

Mr. Mason: Surely what is important is how many of those who find work find real jobs with permanency, as distinct from those who are on short-term, part-time, trainee operations?

Mr. Clarke: I am sure that the bulk of them did. At present there is a growth in the total amount of employment and a corresponding decline in unemployment. There are people between jobs, but the fact is that more and more people are finding jobs in the north and the number of those out of work is steadily decreasing.

Mr. Maclean: Will my right hon. and learned Friend take it from me that we in Cumbria are not aided in our job creation prospects by the doom and gloom coming from Opposition Members from further south, such as Liverpool and Manchester? In Cumbria, unemployment is falling and in my constituency it is below 10 per cent., business is booming, we are creating jobs and we could do without the whingeing from the Opposition parties.

Mr. Clarke: I am sure that my hon. Friend could also add that the commitments of the Labour party, the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party to cut the Trident programme and stop our nuclear power programme pose the biggest threat to jobs in the northern region of any single policy of any party.

Labour Statistics

10. **Mr. Dixon** asked the Paymaster General what percentage of the total unemployed are aged 25 years or less; and what initiatives the Government are pursuing in order to provide full-time employment at average rates of pay for those affected.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: On 8 January 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, 34·4 per cent. of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom were aged under 25 years. All of the employment, training and enterprise measures run by my Department and the Manpower Services Commission are part of the Government's strategy for encouraging enterprise and employment.

Mr. Dixon: Does the Paymaster General agree with the MSC report that of the 200 job training scheme contracts signed at the beginning of May, only 20, or 10 per cent., were with colleges or local authorities in combination with colleges? Is he further aware that the National Audit Office, in a report on the MSC training strategy, said that colleges of further education were good value for money? Will he ensure that there is more public involvement in these job training schemes?

Mr. Clarke: The new job training scheme is coming along well and we welcome the participation of further education colleges. One big problem is that some Labour-controlled councils are misguidedly refusing to allow further education colleges to take part, and I would be delighted to join the hon. Gentleman in asking them to change their policy.

Mr. Spencer: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that British trade unionists have something to learn from their counterparts in Western Europe, who have not priced young people out of jobs?

Mr. Clarke: They certainly have. Although young people's pay in the United Kingdom is still high relative to adults' pay compared with the early 1970s, there has been some movement, so the relationship is rather more sensible. The recent fall in youth unemployment has followed from 1982, when youth wages dropped somewhat in relation to adult pay.

Mr. Duffy: Is the Paymaster General aware that youth unemployment is notably grievous in south Yorkshire, which has been transformed into a wasteland in recent years? Has he studied the latest report of the Child Poverty Action Group, which points out that high unemployment and low incomes have made the Yorkshire and Humberside region one of the poorest areas?

Mr. Clarke: Again, fortunately, the position is improving, most particularly for youth employment. The number of unemployed people under the age of 25 fell by 80,000 last year and has decreased by 120,000 in the past two years. The level of youth unemployment in the United Kingdom is well below the European average and our young people are starting to see the benefits of economic revival, partly because of our schemes, rather in advance of the rest of the population.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that unemployment, whether in the west midlands or elsewhere, is too high? How is that allied with the fact that the Birmingham *Evening Mail* carries 20 pages of full-time jobs every Thursday and Friday? Does he agree with the West Midlands Industrial Development Association, which says that jobs in the west midlands are growing faster than anywhere in the country? How does that tally with Socialists trying to scare people about jobs?

Mr. Clarke: We all accept, as my hon. Friend has said, that unemployment is too high and poses considerable stress and hardship for individuals. That is why we are so pleased to see the growing number of vacancies advertised in local newspapers and jobcentres and the growing number of jobs in the community, all of which is derided by the Opposition, who are extremely concerned.

Mr. Loyden: Does the Minister know that making comparisons with Europe in that sense fails to recognise that many more apprenticeship schemes have been formed in Europe than in this country? What will the Government do about encouraging apprenticeships in the manufacturing, engineering and building industries?

Mr. Clarke: We do not have so many traditional apprenticeships as we used to have, but we are developing systems of training which are more akin to those in Western Europe, where one measures people's ability by the skill they can achieve, rather than the number of years they have served in a trade. Nowhere in Western Europe is there a training scheme as good as the YTS, and nowhere in Western Europe is youth unemployment coming down as rapidly as it is here.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: My right hon. and learned Friend will know that one of the Government's most successful initiatives is the creation of urban development corporations. My right hon. and learned Friend will not know that in Committee this morning the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) announced the Labour party's policy of abolishing them if, God forbid, that party was elected.

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, because that was obviously an incautious slip on the part of the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon), who sits on the Opposition Front Bench—as he is now—as a member of the Opposition Whip's Office. We are waiting to hear from the Opposition which of our various schemes they would abolish. Would they abolish the JTS, the YTS or community programmes? What would they do about the measures which they have been deriding for the past year, which are now beginning to succeed?

Mr. Sheerman: How the Paymaster General said what he has just said without blushing astounds most of us on the Opposition Benches. Almost 35 per cent. of the unemployed are aged under 25, which makes this the most exploited younger generation this century. We have a generation of people under 25 who, if they are not unemployed, are offered thin training schemes which do not lead to real skills, well-paid jobs or a secure future. The Government have offered rotten training, thin training, no skills and no jobs for this generation. The Labour

Government, who will be elected in a month, will produce jobs, quality training and a future for young people as never before.

Mr. Clarke: We now have good quality YTS, which has reached the stage where no 16 or 17-year-old need be unemployed. We can guarantee them a place. The new job training schemes are aimed particularly at under-25s, in order to raise their skill levels and improve their prospects of employment. I wait to hear what the Labour party will say about those training schemes. The Labour party is encouraging the TUC to obstruct the schemes in the run-up to the election. Will it abolish those schemes after the election?

Mr. Watts: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware of the substantial success of the Slough job club—which I opened officially earlier today—in finding real jobs for the unemployed, including those under 25? Is he further aware that I have found very substantial resentment at the attempts of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) to rubbish the success of job clubs?

Mr. Clarke: We now have over 1,000 job clubs. Just under two out of three people who go to job clubs get jobs and more of them go into training and further education. It is a positive disgrace that some unemployed people are deterred from joining those job clubs by the ill-informed and hostile remarks of people such as the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersely) and his colleagues on the Opposition Front Bench.

YTS

11. **Mr. James Hamilton** asked the Paymaster General how many people are presently engaged in the YTS in Britain.

Mr. Trippier: On 31 March 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, about 318,000 young people were in training on YTS in Great Britain.

Mr. Hamilton: Will the hon. Member recognise once and for all that youngsters who participate in a scheme finish up on the unemployment scrap heap? Will he also confirm that if, by some miracle, his party wins the general election—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Hamilton: That is the first time, Mr. Speaker, that I have been given a standing ovation.

Will the Minister now confirm that if, by some miracle, his party becomes the Government after the next election, one third of those youngsters will be coerced into the scheme, and, if they do not allow themselves to be coerced, there will be nothing further at the end of the road?

Mr. Trippier: You see, Mr. Speaker, it does not matter what scheme we introduce for training, enterprise or self-employment in small businesses—Opposition Members seem to delight in knocking it. They do not want those schemes to succeed and until now they have not wanted unemployment to come down. I have news for the hon. Gentleman—it is.

Mr. Rowe: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the turnover of jobs among people under 25 is often rapid and that that provides considerable opportunities for promotion? Therefore, will he take steps to ensure that young people on youth training schemes understand that if they take a job, even at a comparatively low wage, their chances of rising quickly to a much higher wage are good?

Mr. Trippier: That is an important point. The differential between young people who are training, for instance, on YTS, and when they have completed that training—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We cannot have private conversations across the Chamber.

Mr. Trippier: —and find their way into full-time employment is very important. But we start from the position that Britain lacks proper skills training, and we have met that need by introducing YTS.

Local Employer Networks

12. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Paymaster General how many local employer networks are now in operation.

Mr. Trippier: The response from employers, employer organisations and others to this important initiative has been encouraging. Contracts have been exchanged for the first six networks and a further 34 are expected to be in place by the end of June.

Mr. Colvin: Will my hon. Friend add yet another to his list, because the Southampton chamber of commerce signed a contract for a local employer network with the MSC today? Will he acknowledge that the Government have done more than any previous Administration for training in Britain and that local employer networks enable that training to be targeted where skills are in greatest need? I hasten to add that neither I nor any of my parliamentary colleagues in Hampshire, save perhaps the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock), intend to be a candidate for retraining following the general election on 11 June.

Mr. Trippier: Yes, Mr. Speaker, my hon. Friend will not be a candidate for retraining. I welcome what he has said and the fact that contracts have been exchanged. He has been extremely kind in complimenting local employer networks. What is happening in his area means that there will be a real local voice, expressed by industry, in education and training.

Manufacturing Industry

14. **Mr. Ashdown** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the trend in the number of employees in manufacturing.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The number of employees in manufacturing has been decreasing since 1966. At the same time, the number of self-employed people in manufacturing has been steadily increasing. The downward trend in employees in manufacturing has slowed markedly since 1983.

Mr. Ashdown: How do those figures square with the fact that a thousand jobs were lost in manufacturing employment in February and, in the three-monthly average to that date, 9,000 were lost compared with 2,000 in the three months to November? Does the Minister not recognise that unless he puts the same kind of energy and resources into investing in manufacturing industry as he currently puts into manipulating the figures, any reduction in the figures will be cruelly deceptive?

Mr. Clarke: That reduction of 1,000 is one of the smallest that we have had in manufacturing in any month for many years. Manufacturing output is up 15 per cent. since we hit the trough in 1981. Britain's productivity is up 33 per cent. since the previous election. Investment in manufacturing is rising. Our share of export markets is being held. But manufacturing is becoming more technologically advanced. If the hon. Gentleman were to visit, as I am sure he has, as I have, a computer-integrated manufacturing plant, he would see why jobs are not on the factory floor any more. The jobs are in design, marketing, sales and services, many of them serving our wealthier manufacturing industry. That is a pattern upon which we must expect to base policy for many years to come.

EC (Employment Statistics)

15. **Mr. Stern** asked the Paymaster General if he will place in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage employment growth or reduction in each country of the EEC between 1986 and 1987 to date.

Mr. Lee: The latest available information is for the fourth quarter of 1986. During the year to this quarter, the increase in civilian employment was 0·7 per cent. in the United Kingdom compared with 1·0 per cent. in the Federal Republic of Germany, 0·7 per cent. in Italy and 3·2 per cent. in Spain. I regret that figures for other Community countries are much less up to date.

Mr. Stern: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. Does he agree that unemployment in this country is now not only equal to the European Community average but is falling more quickly than in any other industrialised country in the world?

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The United Kingdom has a higher percentage of its adult population in employment than any other EEC country except Denmark. Sixty five per cent. of our adult population are in work.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Robertson** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Robertson: During the day, will the Prime Minister reflect on the fact that this Parliament could have run until 9 June 1988? Is there not something arrogant and impertinent about the leader of a party brazenly talking about a fourth term when she has been panicked into an election more than a year early?

The Prime Minister: I note that the hon. Gentleman fears to face the electorate.

Q2. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Leigh: Will my right hon. Friend find time today to consider the claim made in Moscow by the Labour party foreign affairs spokesman that the Soviet leaders are praying for a Labour victory? Does my right hon. Friend agree that if that were true it would be the best possible advertisement for the Government's strong and consistent defence policy?

The Prime Minister: A Labour Government who would unilaterally give up Britain's nuclear deterrent would no doubt be the answer to the Kremlin's prayers. I am bound to say, however, that I do not think that much praying goes on in the Kremlin. I believe that people there are probably very realistic and realise that after the election they will probably have to deal with a Conservative Government, who will be standing up for Britain's defences.

Mr. Kinnock: During the election campaign, will the Prime Minister debate with me face to face on television?

The Prime Minister: No, Mr. Speaker. I fear that such a debate would generate more hot air than light. [HON. MEMBERS: "Frit."]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister says that she is proud of her record and that she is fighting on her record, so why will she not debate it face to face with me on television?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman will find his own platform. I shall not give him one. I shall put across my record of achievements, this Government's record of achievements. We shall put positive policies— [HON. MEMBERS: "Frit."]

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is very unseemly to use such a word.

The Prime Minister: —in the way that all past Prime Ministers have recommended their policies to the electorate. I have done so twice and I shall do so a third time.

Mr. Jackson: Thinking of recent settlements of the teachers' and nurses' pay disputes, may I ask my right hon. Friend to tell us what the implications would be for public sector workers of income policies along the lines advocated by the Opposition?

The Prime Minister: The last time the Oppostion were in government they introduced income policies. They are no part of our policies. They will always fail and they usually have a devastating effect, particularly on those who work in the public sector. Last time they had a damaging effect, especially on the pay of nurses.

Mr. Steel: Does the Prime Minister recall the number of leaders of other countries—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Steel: —who in recent years have proclaimed themselves as leaders for life? As the right hon. Lady is now aiming for the end of the century, is this what the Leader of the House had in mind when he warned on Sunday against the arrogance that comes with power? Does she agree with him, or are his days now numbered as well?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman seems to have forgotten that I have just asked for dissolution so that we may submit ourselves to the electorate.

Mr. Marland: Is my right hon. Friend aware that Gloucestershire county council, now under alliance domination, had a surplus this year of £4 million on its education budget, but rather than spend that money on books or on improving the schools, the alliance council decided to plunder that fund and spend the money on road improvements in the Cheltenham area? Does my right hon. Friend not think that it is absolutely despicable that the alliance councillors should plunder the education fund for motorists at the expense of the children?

The Prime Minister: I note what my hon. Friend said, but I imagine that, like me, he is not surprised.

Q3. **Mr. Corbett** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Corbett: Does the Prime Minister know that unemployment in my constituency is the 28th worst in the country and has more than doubled to 24 per cent. during her time? Is this part of her Government's claimed success?

The Prime Minister: Had we not pursued policies which have led to economic strength, to competitive industry and to large and expanding sunrise industries in the service sector, the prospects for unemployment would be infinitely worse than they are now. We have efficient manufacturing industry, excellent service industries, very good prospects for expansion and good prospects for the future.

Mr. Crouch: On a serious note, may I say to my right hon. Friend how much my constituents and many others appreciated her presence in Canterbury cathedral last month on the occasion of the memorial service to those who died in the Herald of Free Enterprise? On that occasion I had the honour of sitting beside my right hon. Friend. I have not had that distinction in this place. If I were returning here next time, I would be very happy to sit behind my right hon. Friend on this side of the House.

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I think that the occasion to which he referred was one that united the House.

Q4. **Mr. Loyden** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Loyden: When the Prime Minister prepares the list of successes that she will be parading round the country in the weeks that lie ahead, what place will be occupied by the doubling of unemployment, the increase in homelessness, the decline of the Health Service, the divided society —a more impoverished society, a society in which crime has risen—and the cases of drug-ridden cities? This has been the evidence of eight years of Tory Government. Will she be telling the people exactly what that has meant to this country?

The Prime Minister: I shall be telling them of the economic strength of Britain and the respect in which it is held, that under this Government the people have been able to produce economic growth for seven years, which has generated far more resources for the Health Service, and of a Government who have spread property ownership more widely than any previous Government. I shall point out the negative policies of the Opposition, so vividly set out by Mr. Kilroy-Silk in his book when he

> "The militants and their ilk in Liverpool are the biggest deterrents to job creation on Merseyside that there have ever been."

Mr. Henderson: Is my right hon. Friend aware that Scottish Conservatives are very much looking forward to seeing her in Perth on Friday? When she comes to Perth on Friday, will she confirm that it is the policy of the Conservative Government to serve the people and not be obsessed with the manipulation of power, as Liberals seem to be? Will she also tell the Scottish Conservatives that she has been meeting the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition across the Dispatch Box for four years and it still has not done him any good?

The Prime Minister: I look forward to presenting our case in Perth, the case of a Government who have reduced the powers of Government by taking off many controls, liberated enterprise and reduced income tax, which has led to incentive and growth. I appreciate what my hon. Friend said in the latter part of his question.

Q5. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some time ago.

Mr. Banks: Is the Prime Minister aware that since she has been in office two of the major growth industries within our inner city areas have been child prostitution and street crime? Is this what she meant by the restoration of Victorian values?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, this Government have tackled crime by increasing the numbers of police, where his party has held the numbers. We remember Wapping.

Mr. Richard Page: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the figures that have come in from those companies returned to the private sector have shown that profits have more than doubled? Is she also aware that the dividends and corporation tax from those companies almost equal the amount of money that was coming from them when they were under state control? In view of this double bonus, will my right hon. Friend, after 11 June, please return even more activities to the private sector, to the benefit of the taxpayer?

The Prime Minister: Yes. The industries that were nationalised by the Opposition and that have been privatised by us have done very much better since privatisation, not only in profits, therefore in contributing to tax and helping us to finance the Health Service and other things as well, but for the people who work in them. I noted a report in *The Times* today referring to the National Freight Corporation, which said;

> "An original £1 stake in NFC is now worth £46 and about 6,000 employees have holdings worth more than £12,000 each, with a sizeable number approaching £100,000."

That is an opportunity for employees which the Opposition would love to deny to or take away from them.

Q6. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hughes: Is the Prime Minister aware of the marked increase in unemployment in Wales during the eight-year period in which she has been in office, which shows no signs of receding? Does she appreciate that it will not be disguised, even by 19 changes in the unemployment statistics?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, unemployment in Wales has been going down and the standard of living has been going up—and, indeed, is higher than it has ever been. That is quite a tribute to the Government.

Mr. Maclean: Does my right hon. Friend agree that in this country ordinary parents, ordinary trade union members, ordinary ratepayers and ordinary taxpayers are praying for a Conservative victory?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir.

Mr. McWilliam: Given that the Prime Minister will accept that we in the north are looking forward to the election, will she tell the House why she, with her huge majority, has chosen 11 June as the election date? What has she to hide in the economic figures?

The Prime Minister: It was the best day to choose, and most people are very pleased about it—except for those who are frightened to death of an election.

Clerk of the House

3.30 pm

Mr. Speaker: I have a brief statement to make. I have to inform the House that I have received the following letter from the Clerk of the House:

> "After forty years in the service of the House, of which fifteen have been spent at the Table, may I let you know formally of my wish to retire on my 65th birthday, 1 September next.
>
> I count it a privilege to have held for the last four years the highest permanent position in the service of the House. To yourself as Speaker and to the other occupants of the Chair; to the Members of all parties in the twelve Parliaments I have known; and to the staff of the six Departments of the House, I tender my warmest thanks for the courtesy, kindness and consideration that has been shown me. Nor shall I quickly forget the warm welcome which, as a servant of this House, I have received from Members and officials of foreign and Commonwealth Parliaments.
>
> For all that, and for much else in the unique experience of serving this House, I am, and will remain, most grateful."

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): The House will have heard your announcement with a mixture of emotions, Mr. Speaker. In a few months' time, we shall see the departure of a distinguished servant of the House, and on that account the whole House will have heard your announcement with regret. However, in the new Parliament and before the summer recess we shall have a welcome opportunity to express our appreciation. In accordance with custom, therefore, I suggest that we defer our fuller comments for that later day.

Points of Order

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has given me notice of a point of order. I feel that he should raise it at the appropriate moment, when we come to the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill.

Mr. Mark Hughes (City of Durham): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. What opportunity will be provided for hon. Members who are not seeking re-election to bid their farewells to you—as has been the custom over a number of Parliaments—given the arrangements for Dissolution and Prorogation? There should be such an opportunity?

Mr. Speaker: I understand that there is to be no Dissolution ceremony. I hope to have a private opportunity of saying farewell to hon. Members who are my friends on both sides of the House, who will not have that formal opportunity to bid me farewell in the Chair.

Mr. Bill Walker: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that I can take the hon. Gentleman's point of order. It concerns the selection of amendments, does it not?

Mr. Walker: It is with a view to asking for your assistance over the selection of amendments, Sir. You are aware that we are to debate the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill. The following Act will make provision in Scotland for the recovery of proceeds. The long title of the Bill reads:

> "An Act to make provision for Scotland as regards the recovery of the proceeds of drug trafficking; to make further provision as regards criminal justice in Scotland; and for connected purposes."

New clauses 1 and 2 that stand in my name are designed to create an offence, the offence being to acquire control of another company on the basis of an undertaking in an offer document that is not subsequently fulfilled. If the offence is confirmed, either by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission or by inspectors appointed to investigate the affairs of the company, the penalty would be the divestment of the company that had been thus acquired.

You will be aware, Mr. Speaker, of my interest in what is commonly called the Guinness affair—that promises were made that Arthur Bell and Company would remain an autonomous company within the combined group, after Distillers had been acquired——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am aware of the hon. Gentleman's interest, but what is his point of order for me?

Mr. Walker: Because I know that you are aware of the seriousness of this matter, Sir, I am asking you to reconsider your decision so that this important and vital matter, its related circumstances and the possible offences and penalties may be properly debated in a Bill that relates to Scottish affairs.

Mr. Speaker: This morning, I went very carefully into the selection of the amendments. I undertake to look again at the matter and at the appropriate time my decision will be announced. However, because I went into the matter with great care, I cannot hold out much hope to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Further to an earlier point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take first the point of order of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours).

Mr. Campbell-Savours: When you reconsider these matters, Mr. Speaker, will you take on board the view of the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), who has made it quite clear that it never was his intention to apply penalties to the new clause that he tabled, but that has been rejected? I am informed that the rejection of the new clause was because of an absence of reference——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman can know what was going on in my mind.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: May I say, then, that, apart from being in your mind, it may equally have been in the minds of the Clerks with whom you discussed these matters, who may well have informed the hon. Gentleman? It is on that basis that, with knowledge of these matters, I rise to make my case.

The new clause was referred to yesterday in questions to the Leader of the House. It provides hon. Members with the only opportunity to debate the Guinness affair on the Floor of the House of Commons prior to the general election. In so far as advice had been taken that this new clause was in order, we believed that it would have been selected. However, because of the selection process, Parliament has been denied the right to debate this highly important matter.

Mr. Speaker: I have said that I will look again at the matter; the hon. Gentleman must not bring further pressure to bear on me. Further to the earlier point of order, I call Mr. Faulds. Mr. Faulds. Mr. Faulds.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Faulds.

Mr. Faulds: Oh, Sir, how I welcome that long-overdue summons.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I had to call the hon. Gentleman four times.

Mr. Faulds: Some of us, Sir, who have been in this place for quite a long time are profoundly concerned at the suspension of the proper Prorogation procedures. We find this unsatisfactory, because it means, among a host of other implications that this ghastly Government, who are running in funk a year early, have suspended the proper way of closing the House, or a Parliament. In addition, it is a very discourteous introduction of a change. It means that most of us who would wish to bid you farewell, in the happy expectation of seeing you again, are prevented from doing so. There have been previous Speakers, notably your predecessor, to whom we were happy not to bid farewell——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us deal with the present, please.

Mr. Faulds: I was merely saying, that it would be more healthy for the whole happy tradition of the way in which the proceedings of the House are conducted if this very bad introduction of the suspension of the ordinary Prorogation procedures was not repeated on future occasions. Most of us—and I speak for the youngsters who will disappear and for the old men who will be back—would like a reintroduction of the proper conduct of the House's abrogation at the end of a Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: I am well aware that 87 right hon. and hon. Members will not be standing again. Normally, we would have had a Dissolution ceremony and that would have given them and me the opportunity to bid each other farewell. I understand that that is not be the case on this occasion. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"]. Order. But I share the hon. Gentleman's hope that this will not become a precedent.

Mr. Williams: Further to the point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), Mr. Speaker. I am most grateful to you for saying that you will look at the matter again. If, as my hon. Friend suggested, a conflict of emphasis is involved, and the divestment is not the penalty that it was interpreted as being by the Table Office, it might help if your could indicate to us why it has been turned down so far, so that we can advise our hon. Friends on the further representations that they might make.

Mr. Speaker: Never in all our long history has the Chair given reasons for the selection or non-selection of amendments.

Mr. Eddie Loyden (Liverpool, Garston): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. First, I apologise for not giving you notice of this point of order. The reason was that I had to see the Table Office before raising the matter with you. You will recall that I submitted an application for an Adjournment debate which was ruled out on the ground that there was no Minister directly responsible. The case concerned one of my constituents, Mr. Noel Frank Smith and had to do with the National Health Service. My point of order is that that case was directly connected with a Minister, and I saw no reason whatever why my Adjournment debate could not be accepted in the formal way. I wonder whether it would be possible for you to look at the matter further to ascertain whether that Minister has direct responsbility so that my constituent can have his case heard in the House as is the tradition.

Mr. Speaker: I am not aware of the matter raised by the hon. Gentleman. I shall look into it. Was the hon. Gentleman asking for a second or third Adjournment? The daily Adjournment debates for the week have already been announced.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): I do not think that you should worry too much, Mr. Speaker, about not having a funny little procession at the end of this Parliament. As we have got rid of it this time, it would not be a bad idea to get it into "Erskine May" so that we do not have to repeat it in the future. I say that to counterbalance what some of my hon. Friends have said.

On the more important question about the new clause and Distillers, you said that you would have a fresh look at the matter on the basis of the representations from both sides of the House. I think that you ought to look at it in the knowledge that, notwithstanding all the advice that you get from the Clerks, there are occasions on which they get it wrong. I think that the matter of the new clause should be studied carefully, with a view not to going over the old ground but to trying to fathom out whether a piece of mistaken advice has been given so that we can debate this slimy takeover bid.

Mr. Speaker: I often receive, and am grateful for, the helpful advice of the hon. Gentleman. I certainly accept the advice that he has given me today. I will look at the matter again.

Mr. Ron Lewis (Carlisle): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) and by my Member of Parliament my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Did the hon. Gentleman vote for the hon. Member for Bolsover?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, and I shall do so again.

Will you reconsider your decision, Mr. Speaker? You said that more than 80 hon. Members from both sides of the House were retiring. Your reply was no consolation to those of us who are retiring. I suggest that you give us an opportunity to thank you by bringing back this function.

Mr. Speaker: I share the hon. Member's concern. Unhappily the decision is not mine. If it had been mine, it would have been in accordance with what I think is the general feeling in the House and not with the view expressed by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, in respect of the Diplomatic and Consular Premises Bill, if the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House, further proceedings on the Bill shall stand postponed and that as soon as the proceedings on any Money Resolution come to by the House in relation to the Bill have been concluded, this House will immediately resolve itself into a Committee on the Bill.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the requirements of paragraph (5) of Standing Order No. 53 (Questions on voting of estimates, &c.) shall be dispensed with in respect of the Motion in the name of Mr. Norman Lamont relating to Estimates.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Proper Representation of the People

3.45 pm

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to disqualify from membership of Parliament people with pecuniary interests which are incompatible with proper representation of the people; and for related purposes.

In a few weeks, the people will have the opportunity to elect their parliamentary representatives. Irrespective of party political allegiance, I am sure that all are agreed that the people deserve parliamentary representatives who will put the interests of their constituents before their own selfish pecuniary interests. Unfortunately, the law of the land and the rules of the House do not place an absolute prohibition, or even a clearly defined limitation, on the outside interests that an hon. Member may have. Of course, there is the Register of Members' Interests, but registration on it seems to be purely voluntary, because the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) has for years refused to comply with registration, yet he continues to sit in the House. I submit not only that registration should be made compulsory but that a mere declaration of interest is inadequate. After all, in local government, council members are expected to declare their interests when matters in which they have a vested interest come up for discussion or vote. Normally, those members would not take part in that discussion or vote. There is no parliamentary equivalent to that. There is nothing to stop Members of Parliament from voting to benefit their financial interests and there is no limit on the number of outside financial interests that they may have.

Recently, there was the much-publicised case of two Tory Members who had made multiple share applications in British Telecom. I do not want to dwell too much on that example, because I realise that it is embarrassing to the Conservative party. But it was a example of hon. Members making a financial gain for themselves or their relatives by using their parliamentary vote. Perhaps it was an extreme example, in that the hon. Members who were responsible appear to have broken the law, although it remains to be seen whether they will pay the penalty. There is no doubt, however, that they voted for the legislation to privatise British Telecom and, therefore, were able to take advantage of their vote in Parliament.

Apart from those two hon. Members, more than 100 hon. Members — 91 of them Tories — bought British Telecom shares, and most voted for that legislation.

Shareholding is not the end of the story. More than 50 per cent. of Tory Back-Benchers — 155 to be precise — and almost a quarter of alliance Members are company directors. Thirty Tory Members are directors of or consultants to companies that are involved in public relations, including the professional lobbying of Parliament.

Take the case of my own Member of Parliament. I used to have the privilege, or otherwise, of being one of my own constituents for a decade or so. The Boundary Commission came along just before the last general election, and changed the goal posts, so I find myself represented for the first time in my life by a Tory moonlighter, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). He has a company called Michael Forsyth Associates Ltd. which counts among its clients people intent on making profits from the privatisation of the National Health Service. The hon. Member, in his company's literature,

[Mr. Dennis Canavan]

openly boasts about using his position as a Member of Parliament to introduce clients and prospective clients to Members, including Ministers, to influence governmental or parliamentary decision-making processes.

Lest anyone think that that is an exaggeration, I have with me, on headed notepaper of Michael Forsyth Associates Ltd., a recent annual review in which he refers to receptions, lunches and briefings for Members. The review states:

> "John Patten MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Health, attended a CIC luncheon in January. As a result, it is understood that an internal department inquiry looked at problem district health authorities as outlined at that meeting."

I do not think that I am alone among the hon. Member's constituents in beginning to wonder where on earth his loyalties lie. No man can serve two masters. Constituents are entitled to expect their Member of Parliament to put their interests first before any pecuniary interests of his own. I will not dwell entirely on my own Member of Parliament, because he is not unique in having more than one job. Many hon. Members have more than one paid job, while at present about 4 million people do not have any job at all.

The register of interests discloses that the hon. Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) has 12 jobs, seven directorships and five consultancies. The hon. Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) has 10 directorships. The right hon. and learned Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) has over 40 directorships, including over 30 chairmanships. I do not know how they find the time to represent their constituents properly. Is it any wonder that the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham is hardly ever here? Is it any wonder that the hon. Member for Stirling seems to find it very difficult to find time to hold a surgery in my home town of Bannockburn?

The Bill proposes a five-point statutory code of conduct. At present, there is a code of conduct for Ministers of the Crown. It is not statutory, but they are not allowed to be company directors, for example. The first provision seeks to extend that to all Members of Parliament, so that there will be a ban on Members of Parliament being company directors or having any paid link with professional parliamentary lobbyists.

The second provision is that there be a limit on the amount of outside income that Members of Parliament can earn. Most Members supplement their income in some way or another—for example, by writing the odd article for a newspaper, by a broadcast or whatever. Some Members donate their fees to their constituency party, or a charity. No doubt, especially during the next few weeks, most Members of Parliament would be prepared to appear on television for nothing.

In countries such as the United States of America it is interesting that legislation exists that limits the percentage of outside income that a member of the House of Representatives or a Senator may earn. I propose that there be similar legislation in this country. Even if we limited the external income to 5 per cent. of parliamentary salary, that would enable Members to supplement their incomes by about £900 a year. If Conservative Members think that 5 per cent. is ridiculously small, they should remember that they recently patted themselves on the back for awarding a 5 per cent. salary increase to student nurses, claiming that it was a very generous increase indeed.

The third provision is to make the registration of all other financial interests mandatory. The fourth provision is that, if an hon. Member has an interest, when the matter is under discussion or vote, the hon. Member should not be allowed to speak or vote on that matter. The last provision is that the registration of interests should be extended to parliamentary candidates as well as sitting Members, so that all parliamentary candidates must declare their interests at the time of their nomination.

In a few weeks, the people of this country will have the opportunity yet again to elect their parliamentary representatives. They are entitled to know what interests various candidates have, and they are entitled to full-time representation of constituency interests in Parliament, without any possibility of conflict between the private pecuniary interests of an individual Member and the greater interests of the people we are elected to represent. After all, if Members of Parliament are allowed to use their position to line their pockets, parliamentary democracy will be the loser. Therefore, I ask the House to support my Bill unanimously.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Dennis Canavan, Mr. Max Madden, Mr. Ernie Ross, Mr. Robert Parry, Mr. David Winnick, Mr. Eddie Loyden, Mr. William McKelvey, Mr. Bob McTaggart, Mr. David Marshall and Mr. Dennis Skinner.

PROPER REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

Mr. Dennis Canavan accordingly presented a Bill to disqualify from membership of Parliament people with pecuniary interests which are incompatible with proper representation of the people; and for related purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 157.]

FINANCE BILL

Ordered,

That Standing Committee B be discharged from considering those Clauses and Schedules of the Finance Bill which it has not disposed of and that those provisions be committed to a Committee of the whole House; that the Chairman do now report to the House those Clauses and Schedules the consideration of which has been completed by that Committee; that any stage of the Bill may be proceeded with at the conclusion of the preceding stage, notwithstanding the practice of the House as to the interval between the various stages of such a Bill; and that, on being reported from the Committee of the whole House, the Bill, including those provisions reported from the Committee on 30th April and those reported from the Standing Committee this day, may be taken into consideration as amended without any Question being put.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Orders of the Day

Finance Bill

Considered in Committee

[MR. HAROLD WALKER *in the Chair.*]

3.56 pm

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John MacGregor): I beg to move,

That the order in which the remaining proceedings in Committee of the whole House on the Finance Bill are to be taken shall be Clause 37, Schedule 7, Clause 39, Clauses 41 to 44, Clause 46, Clauses 54 to 56, Clause 67, Clauses 138 to 146, Schedule 12, Clause 149, Schedule 14, Clause 150, Schedule 15, Clause 151, Clause 153, Schedule 16, Clause 154, Schedule 17, Clause 155, Schedule 18, Clause 156, Schedule 19, Clause 157, Schedule 20, Clauses 158 and 159, Clauses 161 to 163, Schedule 21, new Clauses, Clause 38, Clause 40, Clauses 47 to 53, Clauses 57 to 66, Clauses 68 to 137, Clause 148, Clause 152, Schedules 8 to 11, Schedule 13, Clause 164, Schedule 22 and new Schedules.

It may be of help to the Committee if I explain the Government's position on the procedure motion and the clauses before us. We intend to proceed today with all the clauses up to clauses 161 to 163 and schedule 21. We shall not be moving the other clauses thereafter because we feel that those clauses will require further debate. However, I shall be moving clause 164 and schedule 22. Clause 164, as amended, will be the clause necessary to complete the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 37

TIME FOR PAYMENT OF CORPORATION TAX BY CERTAIN LONG-ESTABLISHED COMPANIES AND BUILDING SOCIETIES

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Norman Lamont): The purpose of the clause is to standardise the rules relating to the date at which corporation tax is payable. After a transitional period, corporation tax will, in all cases, be payable nine months after the end of the accounting period for which it is chargeable. As the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) knows, there have been a number of publicised cases with potential tax avoidance in this area and that is one reason why the change has been made.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 37 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 7 agreed to.

Clause 39

CLOSE COMPANIES: MEANING OF "ASSOCIATE"

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The purpose of the clause is to amend the definition of "associate" that is used when determining whether someone has a material interest in a close company, and as it applies in the case where a trust is involved. In practical terms, the proposed changes will affect two areas of tax only—the approved employee share scheme legislation and close company interest relief on loans taken out by employees to buy shares in their companies. The changes have been made principally in connection with the former. Their effect is to relax the rules that determine eligibility to participate in an approved share scheme.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 39 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 41

AUTHORISED UNIT TRUSTS

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ian Stewart): This clause and the next three modify the tax treatment of the income and capital gains of unit trusts. They do not change the substance of the existing treatment. The purpose of the modifications is to take account of the new regime for unit trusts provided by the Financial Services Act 1986.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 41 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 42 to 44 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 46

FILMS

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The clause is designed to improve the effectiveness of the business expansion scheme for film production companies. Film production is already a qualifying activity, but to meet the conditions a company must have engaged in film production throughout the three-year qualifying period. In future, a company will qualify if it is engaged throughout the period either in the production of films or in the distribution of films produced during the period. The change will apply to shares issued on or after 17 March. I hope that this change will be of assistance to the industry.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 46 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 54 to 56 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 67

RETIREMENT RELIEF

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. MacGregor: Clause 67 increases the maximum amounts of retirement relief from £100,000 to £125,000. The increase in the maximum amount is yet another example of the Government's continuing policies to assist small businesses and unquoted trading companies. In particular, the clause will provide encouragement for business men to plough back profits instead of investing for retirement by way of other savings. We have increased the figure above indexation. The proposal will be a major help for entrepreneurs.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 67 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 138

UNIT TRUSTS

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Clause 138 and the following seven clauses make minor and technical adjustments to the stamp duty and stamp duty reserve tax provisions, including adjustments that are necessary to accord with definitions in the Financial Services Act 1986.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 138 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 139 to 146 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 12 agreed to.

Clause 149

SECURITIES, OTHER BUSINESS PROPERTY AND AGRICULTURAL PROPERTY

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Clause 149 and schedule 14 provide for shares in a company dealt in on the unlisted securities market to be treated for inheritance tax purposes like shares in companies that have a full stock exchange listing. They also increase the rate of business relief for substantial minority holdings in unquoted companies. In addition, they introduce minor changes to the treatment of agricultural relief. I hope that they will commend themselves to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 149 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 14 agreed to.

Clause 150 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 15

MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS ETC.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I beg to move amendment No. 44, in page 151, line 6, at end add—

> '( ) If the value of the property when it becomes held on the trusts referred to in subsection (1)*(b)* above is lower than so much of the value transferred on the death of the person referred to in subsection (1)*(a)* as is attributable to the property, subsection (2) above shall apply to the property only to the extent of the lower value.'.

The amendment proposes to insert a new subsection into new section 57A which provides an exemption from inheritance tax in respect of the charge arising from the death of a person who has an interest in possession in settled property if within a specified period of that death, the property is put into a heritage maintenance fund. Subsection (4) specifies a number of situations in which the new exemption is to be denied to prevent exploitation of the exemption. The new subsection covers a further situation where manipulation could otherwise occur.

I want to explain the provision that is amended. Clause 50 and schedule 15 make two changes to the rules that provide exemption from inheritance tax from endowment property put into a trust known as a maintenance fund to support qualifying heritage property, commonly historic houses.

First, there is an exemption from inheritance tax in respect of the charge arising on the death of a person who has an interest in the possession in settled property if within a specified period of that death—generally two, but in some cases three years—the property is placed in a heritage maintenance fund.

Secondly, consequential changes have been made to the rules governing tax changes when property entering a maintenance fund from an interest in possession trust leaves the maintenance fund for non-heritage purposes. The revised rules will apply irrespective of whether the property entered the maintenance fund from an interest in possession trust under the new facility or under the existing exemption facility. Changes are to take effect from Budget day. The purpose is to encourage more people to put heritage property into maintenance funds. That has been difficult to encourage in the past. I am sure that everyone will agree that that is a worthwhile objective.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 15, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 151

ACCEPTANCE IN LIEU WAIVER OF INTEREST

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Clause 151 inserts a new subsection into section 233 of the Inheritance Tax Act 1984. The new subsection allows property offered in lieu of inheritance tax to be accepte[illegible] terms providing that the tax will cease to carry interest from a date earlier than the date when the property is formally accepted if the acceptance of the property is based on its value at that earlier date.

We very much hope that this clause will enable us to retain more works of art in this country and in our galleries. As hon. Members will be aware the acceptance-in-lieu system recently enabled us to acquire Constable's "Stratford Mill". I hope that the House will welcome the proposal as it has been welcomed by the art world in general.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 151 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 153

NOMINATION OF DISPOSALS AND APPROPRIATIONS

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Clause 153 and schedule 16 provide for the establishment and operation of a crude oil nomination scheme for petroleum revenue tax. Under the scheme, a participator in an oilfield may nominate proposed sales at arm's length of crude oil that he has produced himself and proposed appropriations of transfer of such oil to associates for refining purposes. The nomination is to be made within two business days to the Revenue—in practice, the oil taxation office.

As the House may know, the scheme has been introduced in response to developments in the oil market that have enabled participators to pick and choose with hindsight which of a range of contracts and prices should form the basis of their PRT liabilities. There is provision for modifications to be made to the scheme by regulation, thus enabling it to be adapted to meet any significant change in the market.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 153 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 16 agreed to.

Clause 154 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 17 agreed to.

Clause 155 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 18 agreed to.

Clause 156 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 19

RELIEF FOR RESEARCH EXPENDITURE

Mr. Norman Lamont: I beg to move amendment No. 50, in page 162, line 12, after 'purpose', insert

'which, subject to subsection (1A) below, are'.

The Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to take Government amendment No. 51.

Mr. Lamont: The new relief for oil-related research expenditure set out in schedule 19, specifically excludes expenditure on exploration and appraisal. It achieves this by excluding any expenditure for purposes specified in section 5A(2) of the Oil Taxation Act 1975, namely exploration and appraisal activities in the territorial sea and the continental shelf. It was also intended that the new relief should exclude onshore exploration and appraisal expenditure but, following the Finance Act 1975, onshore expenditure is no longer included in the section 5A(2) purposes. The two amendments therefore ensure that the objective of excluding all exploration and appraisal expenditure from the scope of the new relief is achieved, by deeming, for the purposes only of this provision, the territorial sea to include also the United Kingdom.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 51, in page 162, line 21, at end insert—

'(1A) For the purposes only of subsection (1)*(d)* above, any reference in section 5A(2) of this Act to the territorial sea of the United Kingdom shall be taken to include a reference to the United Kingdom itself.'

Schedule 19, as amended agreed to.

Clause 157 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 20 agreed to.

Clauses 158 and 159 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 161

REGULATION OF FINANCIAL DEALINGS

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): I have a question about clause No. 161. It seems that the definition of foreign currency in that clause excludes the ecu. Why is that?

Mr. Ian Stewart: The ecu is not in itself a foreign currency.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 161 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 162 and 163 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 21 agreed to.

Clause 38 disagreed to.

Clause 40 disagreed to.

Clauses 47 to 53 disagreed to.

Clauses 57 to 66 disagreed to.

Clauses 68 to 137 disagreed to.

Clause 148 disagreed to.

Clause 152 disagreed to.

Schedules 8 to 11 disagreed to.

Schedule 13 disagreed to.

Clause 164 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 22

REPEALS

Amendments made: No. 52, in page 176, line 28, at end insert—

'1983 c. 28. The Finance Act 1983. Section 7(4).'

No. 53, in page 177, leave out lines 14 to 18.

No. 54, in page 177, leave out lines 32 and 33.

No. 55, in page 177, leave out lines 46 and 47.

No. 56, in page 177, leave out lines 56 and 57.

No. 57, in page 178, leave out lines 19 to 147.

No. 58, in page 181, column 3, leave out lines 28 to 38.

No. 59, in page 181, column 3, leave out lines 44 and 45.

No. 60, in page 179, line 43, column 3, leave out 'Sections 511 and' insert 'Section'.

Schedule 22, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments; as amended, considered.

Clause 20

CHARGE OF INCOME TAX FOR 1987-88

4.15 pm

Dr. Oonagh McDonald (Thurrock): I beg to move, To leave out Clause 20.

Congratulations are in order on the way in which you conducted the Committee stage, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not know how many words per minute you uttered, but I am sure that the speed exceeds most records and perhaps it should be checked for the "Guinness Book of Records".

We went rather quickly through many technical or unexceptional clauses in the Finance Bill and it is not necessary for us to comment at length upon them. However, I should like to make one small point. In the final version of the Finance Bill, clause 58 was left out. That clause spoke about the Inland Revenue's response to Lloyd's of London and it caused Lloyd's underwriters severe anxieties because it looked as if the Inland Revenue would be more assiduously after them than before. One can only express regret—I shall leave it at that—that the clause was left out of the Bill.

Over the last few weeks, I seem to have done endless reading on the Budget and the Finance Bill. A comment in an article in the *New Statesman* of 13 March seems to sum up the whole debate that preceded the Budget and the debate itself on the Finance Bill. The comment fits the Chancellor rather well. It says:

> "The art of the successful pickpocket lies in diverting the victim's attention at the right moment."

In the run-up to the Budget and during the debate on the Finance Bill, the Chancellor and the Government conducted a successful propaganda operation and diverted the attention of the victims, many taxpayers, at the right moment.

Far from the presentation in the Budget that most taxpayers would be better off as a result of that Budget and the changes in the Finance Bill, we know that that is not the case. Those on average and below-average incomes will find that the 2p off the standard rate of tax on or after 18

[Dr. Oonagh McDonald]

May, depending on their pay, will make virtually no difference to the proportion of their incomes taken in tax and national insurance contribution.

Much as I hate to keep reminding the Financial Secretary of the extremely detailed and most useful answers to my written questions, I am afraid that I must do so. I received a written answer on 27 March, which occupied a number of pages from column 311 onwards and it makes the Government's position on tax and national insurance quite clear. The tables show for 1978 to 1987-88 the proportion of income taken in tax and national insurance contributions from those on half average earnings, currently £113 a week, from those on three quarters of average male earnings, that is to say £170 a week, and from those on average earnings. Most of those people have suffered a substantial increase in the tax take. That substantial increase ranges from about 4 per cent., but it is sometimes even higher.

It is only when we move on towards the end of those pages of tables and look, for example, at a married man with two children who earns 700 per cent. of average male earnings—that is someone earning £1,500 a week this year—that we see that in 1978-79 the proportion of his income that was taken in tax and national insurance contributions was 58 per cent., but that it has now fallen to 48 per cent. That is a 10 per cent. fall, which is a huge drop for those whose incomes are well above average. However, the average taxpayer or someone on below average incomes is now paying more in income tax and national insurance contributions as a proportion of his gross earnings, in terms of the Financial Secretary's figures. I am sure that he read the parliamentary answer most carefully before he signed it and allowed it to go forward in his name.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Would not the hon. Lady's case have greater credibility if it were not for the fact that she is now seeking to remove clause 20 from the Finance Bill? If that clause is removed, she will injure still further those on average incomes whose champion she claims to be.

Dr. McDonald: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman has been following the argument. The point is that even the changes proposed in the Finance Bill, which we are now finally considering and voting on, will make virtually no difference to the proportion of income taken in tax and national insurance contributions last year and this year.

To help the hon. Gentleman, I shall give those figures. Before the changes in the Budget, or rather in the Finance Bill, a married man with two children who is on 50 per cent. of average earnings would find that 16·7 per cent. of his gross earnings were taken in tax and national insurance contributions. Assuming the changes that we are discussing, in this financial year 16·6 per cent. of his gross earnings would be taken in tax and national insurance contributions. Therefore in proportional terms, which I am sure the hon. Gentleman understands, there is virtually no change.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Dr. McDonald: No, I would like to continue my argument. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will have plenty of time to study the matter.

Sir William Clark *rose*——

Dr. McDonald: No, I shall not give way. I wish to continue. I have already made it perfectly clear that if one is talking about the proportion of earnings taken in income tax and national insurance contributions, the figures are all there.

Sir William Clark: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for giving way. Apart from the percentages to which she has referred, has she not overlooked the fact that many millions of retired persons will benefit from the 2p drop in the standard rate of tax? National insurance contributions do not come into that calculation.

Dr. McDonald: I was going to consider such matters, so I shall incorporate my answer to the hon. Gentleman into that. The question I was asked just now——

Sir William Clark: Answer the question.

Dr. McDonald: The hon. Gentleman should not be so impatient. The point that I was making was that withdrawing the 2p cut, or abandoning the changes that the Government have proposed, would make little difference to most earners who pay tax and national insurance contributions. If one makes those changes, and especially if one requires the higher rate taxpayer to make a fairer contribution to the Exchequer than he or she has been making during the past eight years, we shall use those resources, as the hon. Gentleman knows full well is our policy, to raise pensions by £8 a week for married pensioners and by £5 for single pensioners. We shall also ensure that a heating allowance of £5 per week is paid from December to the end of March to all pensioners on supplementary benefit.

All that would be far more beneficial to the majority of pensioners than 2p off the standard rate of tax. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that if I take as an example —*[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman is completely out of touch with the way in which most people live. In my constituency, for example, 4,000 pensioners are on supplementary benefit, and a heating allowance during the winter months would be far more beneficial to them than 2p off the standard rate.

Sir William Clark *indicated dissent.*

Dr. McDonald: If the hon. Gentleman does not understand, I suggest that he goes away and does some homework on that matter.

On tax, a Conservative Member mentioned from a sedentary position the increase in earnings after tax and national insurance. I should like to point out to Conservative Members that the poorest wage earners have seen only a 2·9 per cent. increase in their real earnings between April 1979 and April 1986. However, the top earners have seen a 21 per cent. increase in their post-tax earnings.

Mr. Tim Smith: Where is the evidence and what is the average?

Dr. McDonald: The evidence is the Treasury's own analysis. I think that the average is about 8 per cent. However, it is an extremely distorted average figure—*[Interruption.]* The average is certainly not 21 per cent. The Financial Secretary had better study the tables that are provided by the Treasury. Perhaps he simply put his name to them, or glanced at them without giving them any consideration. The increase is 21 per cent. for the top earners and for the lowest earners it is 2·9 per cent. For the median of earnings—which is not quite the average—the increase is about 9 per cent. However, many people have seen only an extremely small increase in their real earnings. Furthermore, under the present Government, the top earners have increased their share of post-tax income from 12 per cent. to 17 per cent. Again, those are the Government's own figures.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Dr. McDonald: No, I have given way two or three times already and I do not want to prolong this debate. I have just explained to the hon. Gentleman——

Mr. Maples *rose*——

Dr. McDonald: No, I shall not give way. I shall tell the hon. Gentleman all over again in case he does not understand the point. If one considers those earning anything from 700 per cent. to 2,000 per cent. of average male earnings, one finds a substantial drop in the proportion of tax and national insurance that is taken from their gross earnings.

Mr. Maples *rose*——

Dr. McDonald: No, I shall not give way. I have discussed the proportions and spelled out the tables. I suggest that before the election, the hon. Gentleman goes away and reads the appropriate columns from the *Official Report* of Friday 27 March. Perhaps then, unusually, the hon. Gentleman will tell his constituents the truth about taxation under the Tories. I can assure the House that Ministers and other Conservative Members most certainly do not.

We have seen the direct tax burden increase on those on below average incomes, and we have also seen indirect taxation increase during the past eight years. Those taxes hit the poor disproportionately. Currently, the poorest 10 per cent. of households—those on just £3,500 a year—pay nearly one quarter of their incomes—23 per cent.—in indirect taxation. However, the richest 10 per cent.—those on more than £28,000 a year—pay only one sixth of their incomes—16 per cent.—in indirect taxes. The doubling of VAT that occurred under the previous Tory Government has hit the poorest households hardest, and it continues to place a heavy burden on them.

Should we have the misfortune to have another Tory Government, we know that their hidden manifesto proposes to extend VAT on food, children's clothing and other items. It would not be the first time that the Chancellor has done that. He has already extended the base for VAT—for example, by charging it on take-away food. We know that that is what the Government have in mind and, indeed, that is a consequence of their commitment to the internal market of the EEC. Therefore, I am not surprised that the Prime Minister prevaricated on the issue in reply to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Labour party during Prime Minister's Question Time the other day.

4.30 pm

In the past eight years the tax system has been deliberately distorted to make those on average and below-average incomes pay for the tax cuts of the rich, whether through direct or indirect taxation. That is the truth of the matter. Every examination of what has occurred, and even the Government's answers to questions, show that to be the case. This year's Finance Bill makes changes in inheritance tax which in a full year will cost £170 million, but the Government choose to boast about a special tax relief for the over-80s on which they can afford to squander all of £10 million. That shows clearly where the Government's priorities lie.

We have tabled the amendment simply to give us another opportunity to attack the Government's record on taxation and to show the public the truth of the matter before polling day.

Mr. Tim Smith: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Dr. McDonald: The hon. Gentleman is perfectly well aware that I am replying.

We have taken the opportunity of this debate to show the public that they have been paying from their pockets for the benefit of the few. The Government will squander billions of pounds, as they already have done, to benefit those on £1,000 or £2,000 a week, while those who have little more than that to live on a year are paying through the nose to line the pockets of the rich.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Kensington): The hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) has drawn the attention of the House to new clause 20 and I should like to make some brief remarks which point in entirely the opposite direction from those which she has just been making.

The duty of the Treasury—it is one to which I hope the Treasury will return in coming weeks when the House returns after the election—is to provide the greatest possible stimulus to the economy by the adroit use of taxation reform. From the point of lightening the administration of the tax system the Government should also head towards extreme simplification of the tax system for its own sake. I should therefore like to repeat a recommendation which I made at an earlier stage in our discussion of this clause. We should be moving now towards a single rate of tax on all incomes. We should end the anomaly arising from the impact of national insurance on earned income which has the effect of providing a higher rate of tax on earned income than is normally charged on investment income.

We must treat women as entirely separate persons for tax purposes in future. I should also particularly like to repeat my recommendation that we should end higher rate tax altogether. In this way the Government would be adding to the incentives of investors to take risks which would add enormously to the profitability of companies and to the activity of the economy. It would also serve quickly to increase the total yield of tax rather than the reverse. My recommendations, therefore, would lead to a situation in which everyone would gain and nobody would lose.

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): This short debate comes at an opportune time. First, I must comment on the curious way in which democracy sometimes operates in this House. The sight of the Treasury Bench defeating large sections of its own Bill is an amusing end to this Parliament. I only wish that we could dispatch Finance Bills and many other Bills as speedily as we have done this afternoon. It is a great pleasure to see Ministers defeating large sections of their Bill in order to dispatch the House to the country to fight the general election.

If we in the alliance had been framing the Budget we would not have proceeded to make a 2p cut in income tax

[Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth]

at this time. For that reason we have consistently voted against it and will do so again today. Since the publication of the Red Book and the Chancellor's Budget statement we have reviewed all our public expenditure commitments and have published the outcome today. Hon. Members will no doubt obtain details of that extended review in due course.

I shall say a few words about our expenditure commitments in the light of the amendment to delete the 2p cut in income tax. One of the most striking aspects of the Government's Budget forecasts and the Red Book was the scale of the fiscal adjustment and the amount of revenue available to the Chancellor in forthcoming years. It was much higher than had been anticipated by many, certainly until just before the Budget and even on the eve of the Budget. The Red Book showed that there were substantial forecast funds and we must take the Treasury at its word. The forecast was that the funds were in the region of £3 billion for 1988-89, £5 billion for 1989-90, £7 billion for 1990-91 and £9 billion for 1991-92.

Our view, which we expressed during the Budget debates, is that any available funds should be devoted to helping those who have been hit hardest by the recession and to building up the long-term strength of the economy and industry. In our review we have sought to achieve those ends. For that reason we have proposed a package of almost £5 billion to help ensure that the long-term unemployed can obtain work. The long-term unemployed are the section of our community who have been hit hardest by the economic recession and we give them top priority in our expenditure proposals.

We propose several tax cuts to give an incentive to employers to take on more labour, in particular by cutting employers' national insurance contributions in assisted areas, by providing tax incentives to encourage wider share ownership and more investment in industry, and by extending the Government's proposals for profit sharing which were included in the Finance Bill, but which the Government have dropped as a result of the general election. We would change the form of their profit-sharing proposals, but, as I said in our earlier debates on the Bill, we support the principle that the Government have outlined in the Bill.

In addition, we believe that the funds available should be used to help those who are in dire poverty at the bottom end of the income scale, particularly families with children and the long-term unemployed. We propose a substantial increase in expenditure over the next five years to help them and to improve education, health, industry, overseas aid, the arts and the Home Office. Understandably, people will ask how we would finance that increase in expenditure. Our plans imply an increase of some £4 billion in borrowings over five years. Before hon. Members on the Conservative Benches start crowing too much about that, we would have borrowings at a lower percentage of gross domestic product than the Government have had for the majority of their term of office, so it would hardly be an excess of spending.

The borrowings we suggest, compared either historically or with any other country in the Western world, would be a very modest increase. Those borrowings would be necessary to underpin the growth in industry and the economy and to build up the health and education services, which people want to see improved and strengthened. That could be done without restoring the 2p cut in income tax proposed by the Government.

Our proposals have been carefully costed and would be achievable over the coming five years. We would not reverse the 2p cut, but we believe that the Government were wrong to embark upon that road when over 3 million people are unemployed, waiting lists in hospitals are growing and schools do not have the equipment or resources to give children a proper education.

Sir William Clark: The House is following the hon. Gentleman's argument with great interest, but neither I nor some of my colleagues can understand why, the hon. Gentleman having said that his party would not restore the cut, he voted against it.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Our judgment is that the Government should not have embarked upon this road when many people are unemployed and the education and health services should be upgraded. In the light of the figures in the Red Book and the forecasts by Ministers, it is quite clear that we could achieve the objectives we have set without restoring the cut in income tax. One of the alliance's aims is to stop the sharp reverses in policy which have taken place, when one party has reversed the proposals of another party on taxation and other matters.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): As the Red Book was published on the day of the Budget, why did the hon. Gentleman vote against the tax cuts in March but decide in May that his view is different?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: The Minister knows how long it takes the Government to go through their detailed expenditure proposals and come to a conclusion. No other party in opposition, including the Conservative party, has ever costed its proposals, had them reviewed by Coopers Lybrand and published the full figures, as the alliance has today, in order to make it clear to the country that at least one party in opposition provides a credible alternative to the Government and can carry out its pledges. That is clear from the proposals published today.

We could have easily come back within 24 hours of the Budget statement and the publication of the Red Book and, off the top of our heads, made a decision about what we would do, but the alliance wanted to act responsibly and to review the expenditure proposals in the light of what the Government have done. We have completed that review and the findings have been published today. We can achieve our priorities and targets within the expenditure outlined in detail in the proposals and without restoring the 2p cut in income tax. We have no desire to increase the burden of income tax on people beyond what is necessary to achieve the targets we have set. It is credible and desirable that we should achieve both those objectives.

For that reason I am sure that we will gain much support, because undoubtedly the country wants to see the education and health services improved and the jobless cared for. People do not want taxes to be raised more than is necessary. I hope that the vote tonight will be the last chapter of the Finance Bill proposals. We shall go into the election campaign with a fully costed programme which, I am sure, will gain the support of the electorate.

4.45 pm

Mr. Gow: The speech of the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) was characterised during its closing moments by a claim that it was an example of the credibility of the Social Democratic party. I do not know what the fate of the hon. Member for Stockton, South will be when his speech is read in the *Official Report* tomorrow morning by the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins), but in so far as the hon. Gentleman may be an official Treasury spokesman for the Social Democratic party, that is not a position he is likely to hold should he be re-elected in the next Parliament.

His speech was one of the most breathtaking speeches to which we have listened in the House. The hon. Gentleman will correct me if I am wrong when I assert that he is an official Treasury spokesman for his party. If I have got that wrong, I will gladly give way. The hon. Gentleman said that he was opposed to the reduction of 2p in the pound income tax, but that, the proposal now being before the House, he will not vote against it. The characteristic courage of the Social Democratic party was shown in the hon. Gentleman's act of heroism in the closing stages of the Parliament when he led us to believe that he will abstain.

No one from the Government wishes to misrepresent the Social Democratic party, and if I have misunderstood the hon. Gentleman and he will take his courage in his hands and vote in favour of my right hon. Friends who sit on the Treasury Bench, I shall gladly give way. On the other hand, he may vote with his former colleagues in the Labour party. I fully understand that he has not yet been cured of the disease from which they still suffer, because he is wearing his red tie today and he was the supporter of a Government who borrowed where they dared not tax and printed when they could not borrow.

The hon. Gentleman said that he proposes a mere £4 billion extra borrowing. The hon. Gentleman did not say, either to the Chief Secretary or to the Finance Secretary, what would be the effect upon interest rates of that extra borrowing. He did not tell the House, although he had the opportunity to do so, what would be the consequences for interest rates or extra Government expenditure because of the interest the Government would have to pay on their loans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will remember that the late Lord Butler described the Liberal party as a band of visionary missionaries with neither vision nor mission. The hon. Gentleman has climbed into bed with the Liberals and I hope that he will make many more speeches before the House rises.

Mr. MacGregor: I wish to oppose the Opposition's proposition that clause 20 should be deleted from the Bill, but before I do so I want to make one comment on a remark made by the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) about other parts of the Bill. I am sure that he would not feel that it would be right for the House to pass major pieces of legislation on important subjects for the Government without any scrutiny, and that is why we took the view that we did on those clauses today. But let me assure him that the Government propose to reintroduce all those provisions which have had to be left out of the shortened Finance Bill as early as possible in the next Parliament.

When we debated the 2p reduction in income tax in the House less than two weeks ago, the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) accused the Government of showing judgment

"as mistaken as it is cynical"—[*Official Report*, 29 April 1987; Vol. 115, c. 332.]

in choosing to reduce income tax. It is his judgment and the judgment of the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) which is mistaken, both in what the hon. Member for Dagenham said then and in choosing to highlight the clause again today. I can assure the Opposition that the clause could never be regarded as cynical. We have always stressed our determination to reduce the basic rate of income tax with a target of 25p in the pound. This move this year is entirely consistent with that—open, plain, right and popular, and not to be reversed, as the Labour party would do. Therefore, I am delighted that our major debate at this stage is on this clause. Nothing underlines the difference between the Conservatives and all other parties on tax policies more, and the country now has the opportunity to make the choice.

Let me briefly restate why we believe that it is right to take action to reduce the basic rate of income tax. The basic rate of income tax is the marginal rate for about 95 per cent. of all taxpayers. Therefore, reducing the basic rate of tax directly improves the incentives for some 21 million taxpayers. It allows them to keep more of the rewards of their own efforts. It is good for incentives and motivation, and the British economy benefits. If those lower tax bills feed through into lower pay settlements, there will be a directly beneficial effect on employment.

On the other hand, the Opposition's attitude is clear. They believe in high taxes for their own sake. They believe that allowing people to keep more of their own money is —they used this phrase in the previous debate—"giving money away", not giving it back. The Opposition see the tax system as some great engine of social change, penalising those who aim to better themselves and their families. They do not recognise the language of incentives, effort or motivation. They recognise only the language of egalitarianism and interference. They are only happy when they are spending other people's money for them. They do not recognise the moral benefits to the family and the practical benefits to the economy of enabling people to keep more of what they earn to spend as they consider right and appropriate.

The extent to which we have won this ideological argument was demonstrated by the extraordinary attack on the Budget by the hon. Member for Dagenham in the previous debate on this clause, and the hon. Member for Thurrock was at it again today. True, the hon. Member for Dagenham did at times imply—as did the hon. Member for Thurrock—indeed, he stated, that the Opposition did not think that we were right to give priority to reducing income tax. But that was sotto voce. Those were the muted passages in both speeches.

Dr. McDonald: The Chief Secretary cannot be allowed to get away with that sort of nonsense. He knows that it is nonsense. We have made our priorities clear inside and outside the House. We have made it clear that our priority is to raise child benefit and pensions, and, indeed, the tax burden on those on well above average incomes will be increased. That is only fair and we are looking for fairness. To suggest that there are no social priorities and no priorities for jobs is utter and complete nonsense and the Chief Secretary knows that.

Mr. MacGregor: But the thrust of the hon. Lady's speech today, and that of the hon. Member for Dagenham the other week, was to accuse us of not having cut tax

[Mr. MacGregor]

enough. The hon. Lady was trying to say that we had not succeeded in cutting tax enough. Only sotto voce, and only when pressed, do they concede that they will raise taxes. The hon. Lady knows perfectly well that we are not just talking about taxes on, in her own words, the better-off. Her proposal today to restore the 2p tax cut means an increase in taxes on most people and certainly an increase on taxes on all taxpayers. Therefore, the thrust of the Opposition's onslaught is not that we are cutting taxes but that we have apparently not cut them enough. That is an almost unbelievable position for the Opposition to take, given their tax and spending policies.

I can only assume that the Opposition are taking that position for one reason: to accuse us of not being successful enough yet in cutting income tax was, in their judgment, more likely [illegible] receive a better response from the country than to tell them what Labour would do. It is just about the most convoluted position for the Opposition to take up than I can imagine and it will fool no one.

Let me face the charge head on. As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and I have often made clear, we wish and intend to do more to cut income tax, which is in itself an acknowledgement that we have not yet done enough. That is in no small part due to our success in, and the priority that we have given to, reducing that other burden, the level of public borrowing, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) referred. That was another inheritance from Labour that we had to tackle first.

It is interesting to observe that, with current levels of Government expenditure, if we had had borrowing at today's prices at the same unsustainable rate as we had under Labour in 1975-76, there would be hardly any need for income tax. Under Labour today, we would have had all three much higher then they are now — higher spending, higher taxes and higher borrowing, and, of course, higher interest rates too.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Why does the Minister not deal with the argument of my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) about the burden of indirect taxation, which has been substantially increased in eight years of Tory Government? Why does not he answer the point, repeatedly made, about what the Government would do, if re-elected, about those items which are at present not subject to VAT — children's clothing, food and so on? Is not it clear that any re-elected Tory Government are likely to take action that would mean that millions of people would suffer as a result of those items being subject to VAT?

Mr. MacGregor: I was dealing with a separate point, but let me come to that directly. We have made our position on VAT clear on many occasions. The Opposition are making the most extraordinary charges in order to try to make their claims credible and they are failing.

Let me quote from a letter from the hon. Member for Dagenham to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor the other day:

> "It is common knowledge among higher levels of the Inland Revenue that a team of five senior officials from the Policy Division are working on the extension of VAT to goods currently exempt, including both food and children's clothes."

If the Opposition do not know that VAT is handled by Customs and Excise, not the Inland Revenue, it demonstrates how incredible their charge is.

Let me come directly to the hon. Gentleman's other point on indirect taxes. What is also clear is that for a person whose real earnings—that is, after inflation—are the same as they were in 1978-79, which is a perfectly fair test to take, taxation today is much lower than it was at all income levels. For example, a married man on half average earnings in 1978-79, whose earnings have gone up in line with prices, would pay tax and national insurance contributions of 12·9 per cent. under our regime now, instead of the 16 per cent. that he paid in 1978-79. Because that is in real terms and includes prices, it takes account of VAT.

But that is not all that matters. What is much more important—this is the point that the hon. Member for Thurrock is constantly missing — is the increase in earnings that people have been able to achieve under the Government. That is why the hon. Lady's figures were not relevant. The most telling comparison of all is—this is the real comparison, including the increase in earnings and the tax changes — that the real take-home pay of the man on average earnings has risen by 21·5 per cent. under this Government. I am surprised that the hon. Lady did not know that, but that is the fact. That compares with the tiniest increase under the last Labour Government of 0·6 per cent. which is well under 1 per cent.

5 pm

Dr. McDonald: The figures that I used were the Treasury's own figures taken over the years 1979 to 1986. The 21 per cent. increase was for the highest decile only. The Treasury must make up its mind which are the true figures and which are the false figures. It is clear that the true figures are the ones that the Government find most uncomfortable.

The right hon. Gentleman made his little joke about the collection of VAT, but he did not answer the question. If the EC Commissioners recommend imposition of VAT on food and other zero-rated items would a Conservative Government accept that recommendation? Yes or no?

Mr. MacGregor: On the first point, the hon. Lady is quite wrong. My right hon. Friend the Financial Secretary replied to certain specific questions that she asked. The two sets of figures that I have put before the House are the relevant ones — the difference in tax burden for people whose real earnings have remained the same as they were under the Labour Government and, above all, the difference in real take-home pay. The 21·5 per cent. increase is in the real take-home pay of the person on average earnings.

As for any recommendation that might come from the European Community, that is hypothetical because we do not know what the Commission will recommend so the hon. Lady's question is on a par with the ludicrous final question that the hon. Member for Dagenham put to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor .

The income tax cuts proposed by the Government will appear in pay packets from 17 May onwards. A married man with average earnings will be £3·87 per week better off and a married man on half average earnings will be £1·59 better off. Those increases in take-home pay will come into effect at the end of this week, but the hon. Members for Thurrock and for Stockton, South wish to prevent that. A reversal of the Government's proposals would have two consequences. First, there would be chaos in companies. Many employers with computerised payrolls will already have run their monthly pay for May and many others will have calculated pay in advance on the basis of a 27p basic rate, so it would not be possible to ask them to reverse the tax cuts at this stage.

Secondly, therefore, and much more important for the country, employees would receive the tax cuts only to have them clawed back. That is what the Labour party, the Liberal party and the SDP are saying. They intend to claw back the increases in pay resulting from the tax cut. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Stockton, South cannot get away with this. He has been wriggling throughout proceedings on the Finance Bill about the position of the SDP and Liberal parties on clause 20 but he has said that he intends to vote against clause 20.

Mr. Wrigglesworth *indicated assent.*

Mr. MacGregor: The hon. Gentleman acknowledges that. Plainly, if the SDP and Liberal parties succeeded in their intentions today, employees throughout the country would receive the tax cuts at the end of this week only to have them clawed back.

Mr. Wrigglesworth *indicated dissent.*

Mr. MacGregor: The hon. Gentleman cannot have it all ways. If he votes against our proposal today he will be relying entirely on Conservative votes to ensure that the tax cuts appear in employees' pay packets. The consequence of a vote for the Opposition parties on 11 June would be not just a clawing back—that is, a 2p increase in income tax—but in the case of the Labour party much higher taxation to finance huge increases in public expenditure. The hon. Member for Dagenham has been no more successful than his right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) in stemming the torrent of commitments from his colleagues, so a vote for Labour is a vote for higher taxation and borrowing, leading yet again to the familiar spiral of high inflation and deteriorating economic performance which typified Labour economic management in the 1970s.

As the speech of the hon. Member for Stockton, South has shown, the SDP and the Liberals want it all ways. The hon. Gentleman gave a most tortuous explanation in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark). There is a saying that even though a dog has four legs it cannot move in two directions at once. The hon. Gentleman has only two and he endeavours to move in two directions all the time, but the electorate will not be fooled.

I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for drawing attention to the Red Book and the fiscal adjustment in future years because, in so doing, he showed the strength of the economy built up by the Government. I remind the House, however, that those are forecasts and they will come about only with the continuation of our economic policies and our prudent management. To judge from what the hon. Member for Stockton, South has said, typically again the SDP and the Liberals are making huge spending promises without economic policies to produce the necessary growth. It is clear that they, too, are on the side of higher taxes and higher spending financed by higher borrowing when they are forced to come clean about it.

I agree with the Opposition in one respect at least. This proposal is the centrepiece of the 1987 Finance Bill and it continues our firm progress down the path towards lower taxes for all taxpayers. Next week, the effect of these reductions and the higher tax allowances will start to be felt in pay packets. The young married police constable will be £3·07 per week better off, the train driver £3·61 and the average manual worker in the water industry £3·55 better off. That is not a cynical pre-election bribe.

Mr. McDonald: What is it then?

Mr. MacGregor: We have made our tax objectives clear throughout. It is not a bribe. It is the dividend of eight years' prudent and sound economic management—the same prudent and sound economic management which allowed us to reduce borrowing to 1 per cent. of GDP and to increase our spending in priority areas by £4·75 billion this year.

That is the prospectus on which we shall fight the election, not the fictions dreamed up in Walworth road and laced with recurring Labour nightmares about their period in office. Our prospectus has already redynamised the British economy after years of failure and it allows me to offer the House the following assertion which, as we have learnt from today's debate, no other party can offer. The next Conservative Government will seek to reduce the basic rate of income tax to 25p as soon as we prudently can. This clause is strong evidence of our ability to achieve that aim in the next Parliament and I urge the House to pass it today.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 157, Noes 253.

Division No. 183] **[5.06 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashton, Joe
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Barnes, Mrs Rosemary
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hardy, Peter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*

Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John

Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Tinn, James
Wainwright, R.
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ron Davies and
Mr. Sean Hughes.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*

Clegg, Sir Walter
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan

Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hirst, Michael
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*

Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Osborn, Sir John
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*

Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trotter, Neville
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Portillo and
Mr. Michael Neubert.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 34

OCCUPATIONAL PENSION SCHEMES

Amendment made: in page 23, line 20, leave out clause 34.—*[Mr. MacGregor.]*

Schedule 4

EMPLOYEE SHARE SCHEMES, ETC.

Amendment made: in page 124, line 10, leave out schedule 5.—*[Mr. MacGregor.]*

Bill read the Third time and passed.

Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill *[Lords]*

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I have to advise the House that Mr. Speaker has selected new clauses 1 and 2. Not moved.

5.20 pm

Clause 2

POSTPONED CONFISCATION ORDERS

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Ian Lang): I beg to move amendment No. 1, in page 3, line 35, leave out 'section 3(5)' and insert 'subsection (5) of section 3'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Government amendments Nos. 2, 3 and 5.

Mr. Lang: Hon. Members who served on the Committee that considered the Bill will recall that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) were displeased by the use of the words "retransmittal" and "retransmit" in clauses 2 and 3. I admitted that I too found the words distasteful and undertook to consider whether the drafting could be improved without undermining the intention. This group of amendments is designed to remove the controversial words in clauses 2 and 3 and make minor consequential amendments. Hon. Members will see that the terminology employed in the amendments is "transmit". This probably does not go as far as the hon. Member for Garscadden would like, but, as I explained in Committee, "transmission" is the normal term for the handing over of proceedings from one court to another.

I commend the amendments to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 2, in page 3, line 37, leave out
'retransmittal of the case to'
and insert
'case is transmitted under that subsection by'.

No. 3, in page 3, line 37, after 'Court', insert 'of Session'.—*[Mr. Lang.]*

Clause 3

ASSESSING THE PROCEEDS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

Mr. Lang: I beg to move amendment No. 4, in page 4, line 29, after 'accord', insert
', or on the application of the prosecutor or of the person (or on their joint application),'.

In Committee the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) moved an amendment to allow the prosecution or the defence to move for the High Court to remit a question of exceptional complexity to the Court of Sessions. I admitted that I saw force in the argument and undertook to look at the matter again. I have now done so and this amendment will give effect to the hon. Gentleman's proposal. If the amendment is agreed to by the House, in addition to the court so deciding, the prosecution or the defence, or both, will be able to move the court to remit where they perceive the point at issue as one that ought properly to be resolved by the Court of Session.

Amendment agreed to.

[Mr. Lang]

Amendment made: No. 5, in page 4, line 31, leave out 'retransmit' and insert 'transmit'.

Clause 11

INHIBITION AND ARRESTMENT OF PROPERTY AFFECTED BY RESTRAINT ORDER OR BY INTERDICT UNDER SECTION 12

Mr. Lang: I beg to move amendment No. 6, in page 12, line 4, leave out 'such'.

This is a drafting concession in response to remarks made by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) in Committee.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Lang: I beg to move amendment No. 7, in page 12, line 39, after 'order', insert

'or, in relation to that property, under section 12 of this Act'.

This is a simple drafting amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 26

COMPENSATION

Mr. Lang: I beg to move amendment No. 8, in page 21, line 19, at end insert:

', or by virtue of section 24A of the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 (recognition and enforcement in England and Wales of orders and functions under this Part of this Act)'.

Clause 26 allows the Court of Session to order compensation to be paid where, inter alia, a person has suffered substantial loss or damage as a result of anything done in relation to various orders made by the Court of Session under the Bill, such as those for the restraint of assets or the realisation of property. However, new clause 13, which was added to the Bill in Committee, inserted a new section 24A into the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986, which allows orders made in Scotland to be enforced in England and Wales. It is therefore conceivable that someone could suffer a loss as a result of something done by the High Court in England and Wales. This amendment allows compensation to be ordered in such cases by adding section 24A of the 1986 Act to the list in clause 26.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 32

ORDER IN COUNCIL AS REGARDS TAKING OF ACTION IN DESIGNATED COUNTRY

Mr. Lang: I beg to move amendment No. 9, in page 26, line 26, leave out 'enforcement of confiscation orders' and insert 'taking of action'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendments Nos. 10, 11 and 12.

Mr. Lang: Hon. Members will recall that in Committee we inserted a new clause, now clause 32, dealing with the enforcement in a designated country of confiscation orders made by the High Court. However, following discussions that the Home Office has held with several countries, we now realise that the clause, as drafted, will not be sufficiently flexible to cater for the various types of agreement that may be reached. This group of amendments effects the necessary changes to make the clause more flexible.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 10, in page 26, line 27, after 'country', insert

'in consequence of the making of a restraint order or of a confiscation order'.

No. 11, in line 29, leave out 'of the enforcement of' and insert

'arising out of action taken in that country with a view to satisfying'.

No. 12, in line 30, leave out 'in that country'.—*[Mr. Lang.]*

Clause 37

INSOLVENCY PRACTITIONERS DEALING WITH PROPERTY SUBJECT TO RESTRAINT ORDER

The Solicitor-General for Scotland (Mr. Peter Fraser): I beg to move amendment No. 13, in page 31, line 26, after 'construction', insert

'the reference in subsection (2)*(a)* of that section to a permanent or interim trustee in a sequestration shall be taken to include a reference to a trustee in a sequestration and'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendment No. 14.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: These are simple technical amendments to Clause 37, which provides protection for insolvency practitioners to deal with property subject to a restraint order when they have reasonable grounds for believing that they are entitled to do so. These amendments simply make transitional provision to protect, respectively, trustees in sequestration and official receivers in bankruptcy proceedings commenced before the recent reforms in bankruptcy law in the 1985 Act and the Insolvency Act 1986 before these came into force.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 14, in page 31, line 29, leave out from 'manager' to 'the' in line 31 and insert 'of'.—*[The Solicitor-General for Scotland.]*

Clause 42

OFFENCE OF PREJUDICING INVESTIGATION

Mr. Lang: I beg to move amendment No. 20, in page 36, line 2, leave out from beginning to "a" in line 5.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take amendment No. 15, in page 36, line 1, leave out from 'trafficking' to *(a)* in line 5, and Government amendment No. 21.

Mr. Lang: I am glad to be able to tell the hon. Member for Glasgow, Gascadden (Mr. Dewar), in anticipation of his amendment, which is within this group, that we are able to accept the principle of his amendment. I hope that he will not take it to heart if I tell him that his amendment makes for unfortunate drafting. He does not have the same access to the services and advice of parliamentary draftsmen as I do, and I hope that he will agree that the two manuscript amendments in my right hon. and learned Friend's name will make for more effective drafting of the offence in clause 42, which does meet the point that he makes.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): Perhaps I could detain the House for just a moment. Obviously, I am grateful to the Minister for what he has said. This is a comparatively minor matter, but it is of some practical importance. We were talking here about an offence and when it should be possible to proceed—what the trigger point should be. I think that the amendments which we moved in Committee raised a perfectly sensible difficulty.

5.30 pm

I am grateful that the Minister has seen fit to meet that point with his manuscript amendments. There are many things that my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) and I might have said if the Minister has not been in such a reasonable frame of mind. That shows that there is reward for the virtuous. I hope that it concentrates the Minister's mind in the next few minutes. After that, I trust that his state of mind will be entirely irrelevant.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 21, in page 36, line 5, leave out "the investigation" and insert

"an investigation into drug trafficking".—*[Mr. Lang.]*

Clause 44

OFFENCES RELATING TO CONTROLLED DRUGS FINES

Mr. Dewar: I beg to move amendment No. 16, in page 37, leave out lines 36 to 40 and insert

'it is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so may impose a fine but such a fine shall not be imposed if an order under section 1(1) of this Act is being made.'.

The amendment relates to a rather odd passage between the Under-Secretary and myself during the Committee stage. Hon. Members who were involved in earlier stages of the Bill will remember that we are putting on the statute book a very complicated series of provisions, which will allow the courts to impose a sentence of imprisonment in drug trafficking cases—probably substantial, and rightly so, given the current trend of legal opinion and sentencing policy. In addition, the Bill allows for forfeiture and confiscation based on the assumed profits of a course of drug trafficking on the part of the accused. It is a draconian power, by any standards. I must stress that, as it is an important part of my argument for amendment No. 16. It is assumed that any assets that have been acquired during the six years before the point at which the court is considering a confiscation order have been acquired illegally in the course of drug trafficking. That assumption must be rebutted if any assets are not to be potentially subject to the forfeiture order.

It is against that main point of the Bill that we deal with what is now clause 44, which strikes me as an odd clause. It puts forward the possibility of offences relating to controlled drugs, and the imposition of fines for those offences. It has been proposed—and I put this to the Minister—that an individual might appear in the High Court, or certainly might be indicted, and, having been sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment, might then be subject to a confiscation order, and he or his family might be left with no assets of any kind. Moreover, clause 44 contains the assumption that the court may impose a further fine if it considers that appropriate.

It seems remarkable that someone who has suffered the major penalties that I have described should suddenly find himself the subject of a further fine. I consider it a strange proposal for two reasons.

We have gone to great trouble to put on the statute book the confiscation and forfeiture provisions, and in doing so we have repealed the provisions for a fine which we put on the statute book only 18 months ago. We are doing that because it was said, or at least clearly implied, that the Government felt that a fine was not really an appropriate way of approaching the problem; if someone was going to prison, to add a punitive fine was something of a legal nonsense, and it would be much better to go for confiscation and forfeiture.

On the whole, I sympathise with that argument, and I have given it broad support. However, it seems a bit de trop then to turn round and, having substituted the machinery of confiscation and forfeiture, to reintroduce in clause 44—if not by the back door, at least by a side door—the principle of fines in cases involving drugs. I do not see the use of that—here I come to the specifics of the amendment—if we are also going to have a confiscation order.

The Under-Secretary—I believe it was him; my memory is reasonably good—was very forthcoming, as he often is. Indeed, sometimes I think that he is too forthcoming for his own good. He shows a touch of naivety occasionally. He described to me exactly the reason why the Government want the clause on the statute book. I did not like that reason, which is why I put down my amendments and why I wish to pursue the matter in debate.

The Under-Secretary said that I had misunderstood the position. Let me paraphrase, I hope fairly, what he said. He gave an example in which a person accused and finally convicted of drug trafficking was given a 10-year sentence. We were to assume that his assets were £200,000, that there was consideration of a confiscation order, but that when it came to the point, the presumption was rebutted for some portion of those assets. Let me repeat an example that I used in Committee. Suppose that the drug trafficker could prove that £20,000 of shares that he held in company X had come to him indirectly from the will of his old aunt Euphemia, whose reputation in relation to drug trafficking was beyond reproach. He had therefore clearly rebutted the presumption that all of his assets had come from drug trafficking, and the £20,000 could not therefore be the subject of a confiscation order.

In such circumstances, the man would receive a 10-year prison sentence and £180,000 would be the subject of a confiscation order. However, his family would have saved from the wreck the £20,000, because they had been able to establish that it had nothing to do with his history of crime.

The Minister said, I thought rather doubtfully, that it would be possible to put such people in a catch 22 by using clause 44 and fining them £20,000. Although the offender had managed to use that tightly-drawn loophole, rebut the presumption and save some money from the confiscation order, he could then be told, "Your endless ingenuity, my man, has done you no good. I hereby fine you £20,000." If that is the theory on which we are being invited to put this power on the statute book, it does not seem to me to do much for the legal system or the courts. The more that I have thought about the matter, the more I have come to the conclusion that it would be better to do without it.

[Mr. Dewar]

I am not suggesting that clause 44 should go entirely. That might be going too far, and I am as anxious as anyone that the courts should have adequate powers to deal with cases involving controlled drugs. The effect of amendment No. 16—at least, I hope so; I am always a little nervous about my own drafting — would be to leave the courts, in cases relating to controlled drugs, with the power to impose fines. I feel that that is perfectly reasonable. However, it would be made clear that those fines could not be imposed when there had been a confiscation order under clause 1(1).

This is not a wrecking amendment. If it were, it would not have been selected. It is not even an attempt to undermine the intentions of the Government. It is a perfectly reasonable amendment. I accept, and indeed support, the confiscation concept. I also think it right that, when there is no confiscation order, the courts should have the power to fine. However, I do not think that they should say, "We will get you with a gaol sentence and hit you with a confiscation order, and when you manage to avoid some of the consequences quite properly by using the legal machinery on the statute book, we will finally get you with a catch-all fine provision." That seems to be going too far. That is why I tabled amendment No. 16, and I hope that the Government will consider it favourably.

The amendment would not in any way damage the power of the courts to deal properly and severely with drug offences. It merely makes it clear that the provisions and powers in clause 44 will not be available where a confiscation order has been imposed. There is the power to impose a fine under clause 1(1), but we object to the use of clause 44 and are attempting to strike at it in a way that I hope I have made reasonably clear

Mr. Lang: Perhaps I was too forthcoming in our debate in Committee on what was then clause 41. I remember it well. Referring in Standing Committee to subsection (5), the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said:

> "I have read that only three times, but re-reading it has only added to my confusion."

The hon. Gentleman then asked for "a fairly lucid explanation", after which he said:

> "I must be getting tired and old."

However, in the next column he said:

> "Yes, I now begin to see the intensity of the pursuit."—[*Official Report, First Scottish Standing Committee,* 28 April 1987; c. 136-38.]

We have today covered much of the ground that was dealt with in Committee, and the hon. Gentleman has said nothing new to persuade me that we should remove the discretionary power of the High Court to impose a fine in addition to a compensation order. I do not anticipate that this power will be used, except on rare occasions, but, as the considerations underlying the imposition of a confiscation order and a fine are quite distinct, there is no reason in principle why they should not be combined, if the High Court sees fit.

A confiscation order is designed to remove the profits that the trafficker has gained from his illegal activities and to deprive him of assets that he should not have. A fine is, in general, a penalty that may be imposed as a punishment without reference to any profits made from the offence. Clause 1(3) ensures that if, exceptionally, the High Court decides to impose both a confiscation order and a fine, it must take account of the provisions of the order in determining the amount of the fine. The general requirement, that fines must take account of the offender's means, also applies. There is, therefore, no danger that the offender will be asked to pay more than he can afford.

Apart from removing the High Court's discretion to impose a fine as well as a confiscation order, if it sees fit, the amendment also removes the requirement to impose the profit-related fine on drug traffickers that was introduced by the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1985, to which the hon. Gentleman referred. This provision came into force on 30 December of that year, and by September 1986 it had been used on seven occasions. It will remain useful as an alternative to a confiscation order in the case of those traffickers who have derived some profit from their crimes but who have no extensive history of trafficking.

This special type of fine relates to the profits of crime, but only from the crime or crimes of which the offender was convicted. I expect the courts to continue to use such fines in appropriate cases.

This amendment is technically defective. It fails to address the consequences for the general scheme of the Bill that would follow, if it were accepted. Clause 1(3) would become redundant if the House accepted the amendment, and it would be impossible to make sense of clause 44(2) that refers to paragraph *(a)*, which the amendment would delete. Therefore, for technical reasons and for important reasons of principle, I urge the House to reject the amendment.

Mr. Dewar: I am not surprised by the Minister's reply. He said that in Committee I said that I must be getting tired and old. It must have been what the Minister said that did it, including the arguments that he used then that have been rehearsed again briefly this afternoon. Did I understand the Minister to say that the power to fine under the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1985 will remain on the statute book and that it will be available as an alternative to the power to confiscate?

Mr. Lang: Section 193B of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 that was inserted into that Act by section 39 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act is re-enacted by this clause.

Mr. Dewar: I am grateful to the Minister. I see that the Minister's mind is made up, but his arguments are not convincing. He says cheerfully and with insouciance that the courts will impose a fine only when the accused is in a position to pay it. But the accused will be in prison if he has been convicted of a serious drugs offence, and his chances of being able to pay the fine, except in the circumstances that I have described, in which some assets have been left, despite the confiscation order, will be very few. We are piling penalty on penalty, and it does nothing for the system of which this House is the guardian.

5.45 pm

I am not content to let the matter rest there, but at this stage I have no other practical option. We shall be interested to see how useful the courts find these powers. If my suspicions are justified, they will turn out to be lumber in the basement of Scotland's statutes, to which reference will seldom be made. That argument will be settled by experience. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 54

Disclosure of information

Amendment made: No. 17, in page 50, line 27, leave out 'above'.—*[Mr. Lang.]*

Schedule 1

Minor and Consequential Amendments

Mr. Lang: I beg to move amendment No. 18, in page 67, line 35, at end insert—

> '*The Contempt of Court Act* 1981 (c. 49) . . .
>
> (1) In section 15 (penalties for contempt of court in Scottish proceedings) after subsection (5) there shall be inserted the following subsection—
>
> "(6) For the purposes of section 60 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967 (release on licence of prisoners serving determinate sentences) a penalty of a period of imprisonment imposed for contempt of court shall be treated as a sentence of imprisonment within the meaning of that Act."
>
> (2) Section 15, as amended, shall have effect as regards any penalty imposed before as well as after the coming into force of this paragraph.'.

In a sense, this is a victory by default for the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). The amendment meets the point that I anticipated that he would have spoken to in Committee on his amendment, but out of courtesy, in view of the shortness of time on that occasion, he did not move it. It is a technical amendment, but it is necessary to correct an anomaly in the present law in relation to Scotland alone, whereby prisoners are excluded from review or from grant of licence for early release on parole if they are serving a single sentence of imprisonment for contempt of court, or a sentence of imprisonment for contempt of court that is consecutive to an ordinary sentence of imprisonment. The amendment returns this aspect of the operation of the parole scheme to that which was originally intended and brings the law of Scotland into line with the current position in England and Wales. I believe that the amendment will meet with all-party support and I commend it to the House.

Mr. Dewar: I am grateful to the Minister. It is a sensible amendment. The amendment that was not reached in Committee, for a variety of practical reasons, was well-founded. As he has introduced a small reform that will improve the working of the parole system, I intend to provide the Minister with a number of excellent suggestions, backed by the Chief Inspector of Prisons and a very large number of other people on the Parole Board for Scotland, that would greatly improve the working of the parole system. However, you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would not allow me to do that now. Therefore I promise the Minister that either from that side of the House or, if we are not fortunate enough to form the next Government, in other circumstances, we shall pursue those suggestions. For the small improvement that has been tendered, I am prepared to thank the Minister, even though my thanks are somewhat muted.

Amendment agreed to.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be now read the Third time.—*[Mr. Lang.]*

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You will be aware that earlier this afternoon Mr. Speaker kindly said that would look again at the selection of amendments. I have not heard from him, but I imagine that he has advised you about whether he has reviewed the selection.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): At the commencement of consideration of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill I announced to the House that Mr. Speaker had selected the new clauses. I recall calling the hon. Gentleman's name, but he was not in his place when we began our proceedings on consideration.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

Family Law Reform Bill *[Lords]*

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

New Clause 1

POWERS OF COURT TO MAKE ORDERS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CHILDREN OF PERSONS COHABITING OR A CHILD OF EITHER OF THEM

'(1) Where on an application for an order under this section the court is satisfied that the respondent has used, or threatened to use, violence against the person of a child of either the applicant, respondent, or both of them and that it is necessary for the protection of any such child that an order should be made under this subsection, the court may make the following order, that is to say an order that the respondent shall not use, or threaten to use, violence against the person of a child of either party to the application, or both of them.

(2) Where on an application for an order under this section the court considers that it is essential that the application should be heard without delay, the court may hear the application notwithstanding—

(a) that the court does not include both a man and a woman,

(b) that any member of the court is not a member of a domestic court panel, or

(c) that the proceedings on the application are not separated from the hearing and determination of proceedings which are not domestic proceedings.

(3) Where on an application for an order under this section the court is satisfied that there is imminent danger of physical injury to a child of the applicant, respondent, or both of them, the court may make an order under subsection (1) above notwithstanding—

(a) that the summons has not been served on the respondent or has not been served on the respondent within a reasonable time before the hearing of the application, or

(b) that the summons requires the respondent to appear at some other time or place, and any order made by virtue of this section and in section 17 of this Act referred to as an "expedited order".

(4) The power of the court to make, by virtue of subsection (3) above, an expedited order under subsection (2) above may be exercised by a single justice.

(5) An expedited order shall not take effect until the date on which notice of the making of the order is served on the respondent in such manner as may be prescribed or, if the court specifies a later date as the date on which the order is to take effect, that later date, and an expedited order shall cease to have effect on whichever of the following dates occurs first, that is to say—

(a) the date of the expiration of the period of 28 days beginning with the date of the making of the order; or

(b) the date of the commencement of the hearing, in accordance with the provisions of part II of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1952, of the application for an order under this section.

(6) An order under this section may be made subject to such exceptions or conditions as may be specified in the order and, subject in the case of an expedited order to subsection (8) above, may be made for such terms as may be so specified.

(7) The court in making an order under subsection (1) above may include provision that the respondent shall not incite or assist any other person to use, or threaten to use, violence against the person of a child or either or both of them.'—*[Mr. Sims.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

5.51 pm

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to take the following: New clause 2—*Supplementary provisions with respect to orders under section (Powers of court to make orders for the protection of the children of persons cohabiting or a child of either of them)*—

'A magistrates' court shall, on an application made by either the man or the woman in question, have power by order to vary or revoke any order made under section (Powers of court to make orders for the protection of the children of persons cohabiting or a child of either of them) of this Act.

(2) Rules may be made for the purpose of giving effect to the provision of section (Powers of court to make orders for the protection of the children of persons cohabiting or a child of either of them) of this Act.

(3) The expiry by virtue of subsection (5) of section (Powers of court to make orders for the protection of the children of persons cohabiting or a child of either of them) of this Act of an expedited order shall not prejudice the making of a further expedited order under that section.'.

New clause 3—*Powers of arrest for a breach of an order under Section (Powers of court to make orders for the protection of the children of persons cohabiting or a child of either of them)*—

'(1) Where a magistrates' court makes an order under section ( ) of this Act which provides that the respondent shall not use violence against a child of the applicant, respondent, or of both of them, the court may, if it is satisfied that the respondent has physically injured the child as aforesaid and considers that he is likely to do so again, attach a power of arrest to the order.

(2) Where by virtue of subsection (1) above a power of arrest is attached to an order, a constable may arrest without warrant a person whom he has reasonable cause for suspecting of being in breach of any such provision of the order as is mentioned in subsection (1) above by reason of that person's use of violence.

(3) Where a power of arrest is attached to an order under subsection (1) above and the respondent is arrested under subsection (2) above—

(a) he shall be brought before a justice of the peace within a period of 24 hours beginning at the time of his arrest, and

(b) the justice of the peace before whom he is brought may remand him. In reckoning for the purposes of this subsection any period of 24 hours, no account shall be taken of Christmas Day, Good Friday, or any Sunday.

(4) Where a court has made an order under section 16 of this Act but has not attached to the order a power of arrest under subsection (1) above then, if at any time the applicant for that order considers that the other party to the marriage in question has disobeyed the order, he may apply for the issue of a warrant for the arrest of that other party to a justice of the peace for the commission area in which either party to the marriage ordinarily resides; but a justice of the peace shall not issue a warrant on such an application unless—

(a) the application is substantiated on oath, and

(b) the justice has reasonable grounds fo believing that the other party to the marriage has disobeyed that order.

(5) The magistrates' court before whom any person is brought by virtue of a warrant issued under subsection (4) above may remand him.'.

Mr. Sims: I am conscious of the pressures of time and I shall speak briefly.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was in my place in the Chamber when the debate on the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill began. I am astonished that I did not hear your remarks. The first thing that I heard was the Minister's name being called.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have told the hon. Gentleman—I hope that I do not have to repeat it—that I drew to the attention of the House the fact that Mr. Speaker had reconsidered and had selected the new clauses. I called the hon. Gentleman's name. He was neither within my sight, nor did he respond. We cannot go back now.

Mr. Sims: The brevity of my remarks in support of the new clause indicates that there is special business in the House and does not detract from the importance of the proposal.

The House will be aware that, under the Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates' Courts Act 1978, a woman who is suffering violence or whose children are suffering violence can apply to the court for a protection order, provided that the man causing the violence is her husband and that the children are a product of their marriage. No such facility is available to a co-habitee in respect of herself or her children. If a man inflicts violence upon a woman with whom he is living, and upon their children, that woman is unable to apply to the courts simply because the couple are not married and the children are illegitimate.

It seems to me that the Bill provides us with an appropriate occasion on which to remedy that defect. My right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General will be aware that the Justices Clerks Society and the Magistrates Association wrote to the Lord Chancellor's Department suggesting that illegitimate children should receive the same protection as the children of a married couple and that this Bill provides the ideal opportunity to ensure that that happens in future. I understand that the Lord Chancellor's Department suggested that the Bill was not the appropriate vehicle for the introduction of the facility, because such a provision would fall outside the long title of the Bill. Indeed, the House may recall that in Committee I tabled a new clause to deal with the matter which was ruled out of order. I therefore discussed the matter with the Justices Clerks Society which produced the present new clauses. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will agree that they meet the objections as they are confined to the children of co-habitees and do not refer to the co-habitees themselves. They thus appear to fall within the long title of the Bill.

I very much hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will appreciate my point—that this would be a valuable extension of the law to offer protection to illegitimate children. After all, the object of the Bill is to remove most of the disadvantages that illegitimate children suffer at present. Despite my short speech and the pressures of business, I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will feel able to accept the new clauses.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): I support the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims). It is unfortunate that, owing to the circumstances in which we are to deal with the Bill, it cannot be given more careful consideration. In particular, we shall not be allowed the opportunity to say that clause 27 should not have been included. It is an abomination, and in including it, we shall be legislating a lie. That ought to be said before the Bill is passed.

Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): I, too, very much regret the inclusion of clause 27. I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General. I understand that he intends to alter some of the more obnoxious aspects of the Bill and that he may be tabling manuscript amendments to do that. We thank him for that, but we still do not like clause 27.

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): My right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General is well aware of the grave concern felt by many people in the House and outside that page 1 of the Bill, makes it clear that the principle of clause 1, and, indeed, the general principle of the Bill should be:

> "Parents not being married to have no effect in law on relationships."

To most of us in the House, that principle is not tenable. The principle of marriage deserves every support because it is under attack from every quarter. Unless we can sustain marriage and keep good family relationships, the whole of our society is bound to suffer. I know my right hon. and learned Friend, and feel sure that those words are not his. Surely, anyone outside the House would be concerned to learn that Parliament was considering introducing legislation to the effect that marriage should have no effect in law on relationships. I beg my right hon. and learned Friend——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The fault may be mine, but I find it difficult to understand the relevance of the hon. Lady's remarks to the new clause.

Dame Jill Knight: If I am out of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall certainly not repeat my remarks later. I took my cue from my hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster (Mrs. Kellett-Bowman) and perhaps I was wrong to do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Lady has beaten me to the punch. Has she concluded her remarks?

Dame Jill Knight: I was about to conclude by suggesting to my right hon. and learned Friend that he take note of what has been said and, indeed, that he take action on it.

Mr. Nicholas Brown (Newcastle Upon Tyne, East): I, too, shall be protective of the time of the House.

The subject dealt with in the new clause was discussed on Second Reading but not in Committee, where the amendments tabled by the hon. Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) were not called for debate. While I think that it is perfectly proper for the hon. Gentleman to bring these matters before the House again, I believe—and I suspect that this may be the Government's view—that the Bill is not the appropriate vehicle for the change that he suggests. As promised, I considered the matter carefully after Second Reading and concluded that the arguments advanced by the Solicitor-General on Second Reading were essentially sound.

I accept the hon. Gentleman's argument that the Bill is a vehicle to give illegitimate children legal protection equal to that now enjoyed by legitimate children. But it is not true to imply—I am sure the hon. Gentleman knows this — that such youngsters now have no remedy in English law. There is a remedy, and the amendments are concerned with the question of precisely where that remedy lies. Although I understand the hon. Gentleman's point, I do not feel that this is the right way to deal with the matter.

If I may try your patience for a second, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) was being a little naughty when she said that the words

> "Parents not being married to have no effect in law on relationships."

embodied the principle of the Bill.

Dame Jill Knight: It is in the Bill.

Mr. Brown: The hon. Lady made the point that the Bill says that. As was patiently explained in Committee, that is said in the margin note which does not form part of the law of the land. Unfortunately, the margin note is in shorthand, which does not convey the Bill's real intent. It is not true to suggest that the Bill is intended to undermine the institution of marriage. It is unthinkable that the Solicitor-General would bring forward a Bill to undermine the institution of marriage. I cannot conceive of such a thing, and the hon. Member for Edgbaston is naughty to suggest it.

6 pm

Dame Jill Knight: The hon. Gentleman has just said that this is an inaccurate description of the Bill. Surely, if it is inaccurate, we should put the matter right and make the position clear. I am merely saying that that is what the Bill says as a general principle and, like the hon. Gentleman, I feel that that cannot be right. I am not trying to be naughty. I can be a lot naughtier to much greater effect. I am merely suggesting that it might be wise to straighten this out.

Mr. Brown: I am sure that the hon. Lady and I can agree that the margin note is clumsy.

The Solicitor-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) for giving us the opportunity to consider the issues raised in the new clauses put forward by the Justices Clerks Society with, I think, the support of the Magistrates Association. It would not have been possible to listen to what my hon. Friend had to say without feeling sympathy for the object that he sought to serve—to secure for illegitimate children the same protection by way of intervention by court order, if necessary taken speedily and summarily, that is available under existing legislation to legitimate children.

The new clauses seek to amend the Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates Courts Act 1978. That Act was based on a Law Commission report in which, rightly or wrongly, the view was taken that the new jurisdiction proposed for magistrates courts should be limited to married couples. As my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst knows, the main content of the Bill is concerned with the implementation of the Law Commission's recommendations contained in two reports dealing with illegitimacy that have been produced in recent years.

I have to say—rather reluctantly, I must confess—that it is the Government's view that it would be better that the Law Commission should be involved in any exercise entailing substantial amendment to the Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates Courts Act. My hon. Friend's suggestion will be put to the Law Commission's family law team, which intends to review this aspect of the law in the near future. I can offer that hope and reassurance. I ask the House to resist these new clauses on the ground that to make the suggested change at this stage would be premature and at odds with the majority of the Bill's provisions, which are the result of careful consultation.

The Law Commission's recommendations have been made as a result of extensive consultation with organisations and people with special interests. No such consultation has been carried out on the proposals in the new clauses. I think that it might be wise to do so. I doubt that I would accede to the advice that I have received if I did not know that the matter will be immediately referred to the family law team and that it intends at an early stage in the near future to review it. I fear that I have to advise the House not to accept the new clauses.

Since the new clauses bear on the Bill's scope, it would be sad if I were not able to respond to the observations of my hon. Friends the members for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook), for Lancaster (Mrs. Kellett-Bowman) and for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight). I shall deal first with the description of the provisions in clause 1. In Committee, my hon. Friends the Members for Edgbaston and for Lancaster made clear their anxiety that no provisions should go forth from the House that might be seen to cast doubt on or to devalue the importance attached to the institution of marriage. Of course, in that regard, there is nothing between my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor, who introduced the Bill, myself, any Conservative Member and any other hon. Member.

The principle contained in clause 1 is simple. There shall be a new rule of construction—the presumption of illegitimacy when construing a relationship between any two people — the father or the mother — is to be irrelevant. We are talking about the consequences in law of the fact that there has been an illegitimate birth. That is expressed in clause 1, which states:

"unless the contrary intention appears"

relationships are to be construed without regard to the marital status of the parents at the time of the child's birth. That lawyer's language is necessary to pave the way for the Bill's main provisions which are designed to relieve illegitimate children from the sins—if one likes to put it that way—of their fathers or their mothers. The Law Commission took the view after careful consideration, and it is the Government's view, that, whatever one may think about the rights and wrongs of engendering children whose birth will be illegitimate, it is wrong to take it out on the children, in the sense that they are subjected throughout their lives to handicaps imposed by law.

I understand that the margin note—

"Parents not being married to have no effect in law on relationships."—

can create the impression about which my hon. Friend the Member for Edgbaston is so naturally and properly anxious. I agree that not everyone who sees the margin note is likely to read the clause and not everyone who reads the clause is likely, on a first reading, to understand it. I offer this reassurance: I am prepared to give an undertaking that, when the Bill is printed as an Act, that shoulder note and, with it, the corresponding entry in the index relating to clause 1 will be deleted and the words "general principle" alone will be substituted. That will show that clause 1 contains the general principle of the Bill.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Edgbaston for having drawn our attention to this matter. It strikes a chord. Perhaps we should have seen it earlier. With her accurate eye for this kind of thing, my hon. Friend has done the House a service. If she is content with that, perhaps we can proceed. The question is whether we intend to continue taking out on illegitimate children the circumstances of their birth. The whole thrust of this part of the Bill is that we will not do so.

I should like to say something about clause 27, which has been raised. Whatever view one may take and whatever view Parliament may take in future about whether, and if so in what circumstances, artificial insemination by whatever means may be permitted in law — no doubt, we shall take those decisions after consultation has been completed on the Warnock committee's report — the clause simply says that any child who is the result of a birth that is the result of artificial insemination by donor shall not carry for the rest of his or her life the handicap in law of illegitimacy but shall be treated for all purposes in law as the child of the mother and the child of her husband, provided that the husband has consented. That is all that it does. It says nothing about the circumstances under which AID may be permitted in future. In those circumstances I hope that the House will consider that it would be an omission had a Bill dealing with the consequences of illegitimacy said nothing at this stage. Much remains to be debated about the rest of the Warnock report, but that is the purpose of including this provision.

Dame Jill Knight: Is it not the case at the moment that any child born to a couple who are married to each other is automatically assumed, perhaps sometimes wrongly, to be the child of that couple at law? It was our understanding that the position at law now is exactly what clause 27 will bring into law; therefore, it puzzles us why it is in the Bill.

The Solicitor-General: Whether a child is a legitimate child or an illegitimate child is a matter of law. It is a matter of status conferred by law. The entry in a birth certificate is evidence but is not conclusive evidence of which status is appropriate. One of the matters that I fully understand causes anxiety to certain hon. Members is that clause 27 has the consequence that an entry in a birth certificate shall not reveal the scientific facts. The other side to that aspect is that a birth certificate at present contains only that which Parliament has said it shall contain. In other words, the column headed "Father" in a birth certificate is intended to provide a space for the entry of that person who, by the definition that Parliament has imposed, constitutes the father. If clause 27 is enacted, that definition will be enlarged. I do not believe that this is really at the head and forefront of what we have to decide.

Mr. Stanbrook: Is my right hon. and learned Friend confirming that henceforth, on a birth certificate, it will be possible for the name of the man who is the husband of the child's mother to be entered as the father, which may be untrue, and that therefore, we might be legislating for a lie?

The Solicitor-General: I do confirm that. However, I do not confirm the consequences that my hon. Friend says will follow, because what will be entered in the birth certificate in those circumstances will be consistent with what Parliament has authorised to be entered. As a matter of practice, it is well recognised that, in many cases where a child has been born as a result of artificial insemination by donor, the child's name is entered in the birth certificate as the child of the mother who gave birth. That is a matter of practice. Nor is it possible in most cases for that to be detected. Where the medical advice to couples who are infertile has been to continue to have sexual intercourse with each other after artificial insemination by donor has taken place, it will not be possible to determine from which father the conception has taken place.

My hon. Friend is absolutely right in saying that, if "father" is interpreted as meaning the father in wedlock of a child, there will be some deception, I suppose one could say. However, we have to look at whether there is some irregularity at law. If Parliament has so defined "father" in the context of a birth certificate, all that will be entered is the name of the person that Parliament has ordained shall be entered. I respectfully say that this should not be at the forefront of the argument. The argument centres around whether artificial insemination by donor should be permitted at law and, if so, under what circumstances. As to that major issue, Parliament will have the opportunity to express its view at a later stage, as I have already indicated. The clause merely says that if and when there is birth as a result of AID, the resulting child — and after all, it is the child we ought to have regard for primarily — shall not carry the handicap of being illegitimate in the eye of the law.

6.15 pm

Mr. Sims: I shall not yield to the temptation to react to all the points that have arisen as a result of the wide-ranging debate on my new clause, save to say that I made my own views on clause 27 clear in Committee and that I in no way resile from them. I am naturally disappointed that my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General does not feel able to accept the new clauses but I am grateful for his helpful and sympathetic comments. In the light of his comments, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the new clause.

Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Order for Third Reading read.—[Queen's consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified.]

6.16 pm

The Solicitor-General: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

We have carefully considered the Bill in Standing Committee and again today and I believe that I would be wearying the House if I were to do more than formally move its Third Reading.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

Local Government Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Clause 2

POWER TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PRIVATELY LET HOUSING ACCOMMODATION

6.17 pm

The Minister for Local Government (Dr. Rhodes Boyson): I beg to move amendment No. 12, in page 1, line 17, leave out clause 2.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): With this we may take Government amendments Nos. 2, 5, 16 and 19.

Dr. Boyson: There was a short delay before I moved the amendment because I was transfixed with new clause 1, which I believe has been withdrawn. That threw me into temporary confusion. I assure the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) that I had no intention of confusing anybody, particularly as I have written a special limerick for the anniversary of Edward Lear's birthday in 1812, which was not a good year for Napoleon. I was ready to read my limerick but, lo and behold, the clause has been withdrawn. If possible I will try to fit in reading it on Third Reading as I would not like to deprive the House of hearing it. It is in good heart and I am sure will be critically enjoyed by the hon. Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) who has just resumed his seat on the Labour Front Bench. I trust that he is better and that the debate will not worsen his health in any way but will bring about his revival.

In the circumstances, the Government have decided not to proceed with the housing provisions of the Bill in the present Session of Parliament. The first three amendments delete those provisions, and the other two are consequential. However, we intend to reintroduce in the new Parliament the provisions in clause 2 to give local housing authorities an explicit new power to give financial assistance in connection with the provision of privately let housing. We also intend to reintroduce the provisions in clauses 3 and 4 that require the Secretary of State's consent for the exercise of this or any other power by local housing authorities or county councils to provide financial assistance or a gratuitous benefit in this connection, except in the circumstances set out in clause 3. The need for consent will be made retrospective to 6 February this year as it was in the present Bill. The new Bill will, like this Bill, also provide that any transaction entered into after 5 February in contravention of the requirement for the Secretary of State's consent will be void.

Meanwhile, we intend to continue to issue general consents and special consents for individual projects submitted to us where appropriate. These consents will be issued as if the new Bill were in force. We shall ensure that general and special consents already issued continue in force. My Department will be writing to all the authorities affected drawing their attention to this announcement to prevent any further misunderstanding.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): I certainly do not wish to deprive the Minister of the opportunity of letting the House and the country hear his doggerel. I have had a preview of it and although it might not make its way into "Palgrave's Golden Treasury", I hope that the good people of Brent and elsewhere are entertained by it in the dog hours of this Parliament.

We do not oppose the amendments that the Minister has moved. Whether the clauses are resurrected depends upon the outcome of a contest on 11 June. It is not our view that in government we would resurrect the clauses. In any event, it would be conducive to poor administration if the clauses were introduced in their present form because we showed in Committee that the scheme of controls is, in principle, so draconian that a whole string of general and specific consents would be required to make it remotely operable. While the officials, who will not have much to do in the next three and half weeks, are preparing the briefs for incoming Ministers, they may wish to consider how, as an exercise in good government, the powers could be improved.

The statement by the Minister that this Administration in its closing weeks will continue to operate as if the Bill had been passed, is touching on the arrogance with which we shall charge the Conservative party during the election and it does not make for good administration. We also pointed out in Committee that, although the Government had said that the powers under clauses 2, 3 and 4 had been introduced ostensibly to provide new powers for local authorities, their effect was actually to secure new controls on local authorities and to undermine the imaginative scheme for new housing that Sheffield and other authorities had pioneered.

I believe that we are dealing with amendments that delete clause 7:

> "Land held by public bodies."

That deletion is welcome.

Mr. Michael Meadowcroft (Leeds West): I should like to be part and parcel of the obsequiousness on certain sections of the Bill and to make the point that at least on this occasion I arrived, although a little late, in time to take part. On the previous occasion when the three of us—the Minister, the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and myself—were supposed to be performing in another place — not down the corridor, but somewhere else altogether — thanks to British Airways I arrived 20 seconds too late, having been up from 4.45 am. Therefore, I am glad to be here. I am interested in the doggerel that we may hear. I recall a recent cartoon in the *New Statesman* where a sign on a house door said, "Beware of the Doggerel". I hope that that does not apply to us.

On the matter of the housing provisions, I ask the Minister to address himself to one point. If those sections of the Bill are to disappear, how will he stand up to a legal challenge in the weeks ahead for those local authorities that may wish to drive through those provisions? By the very nature of the powers that the Minister is trying to take under that section, he assumes that there are local authorities whose attitude to those financial measures about housing are not those of the Government and which may wish to take advantage of that gap. If there is to be no statute dealing with that at this time, I fail to see how the Government can maintain the 6 February retrospective date in the face of legal challenges that might come. I hope that the Minister will address himself to that.

On the early clauses about creative accounting, the Minister knows that my party has certain difficulties with the text. Nevertheless, it is accepted that something has to be done about those authorities that have gone to extremes. Therefore, it seems a pretty fair bargain that we opt out of the housing clauses but leave the early clauses in. Therefore, we raise no objection to what has been proposed today.

Dr. Boyson: The early clauses—clause 1 and schedule 1—validate a decision made by the Government last July about which we said we would legislate. I believe that midnight on 22 July 1986 was the date. We took action in February for another line of action we wished to take and we said that we would put that into law. We did not state when we would do that; we just said that we would. The date of 22 July is now validated in the Bill and we wish to put it on record that, because of the pressure of time and the constraints of other activities of which we are all aware—the political marathon on which we are now entering—we cannot put the other date into law in this Bill. However, we are putting it on record that we stand by what we said. I am advised by our lawyers that that is perfectly legitimate.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3

CONSENT REQUIRED FOR PROVISION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ETC.

Amendment made: No. 2, in page 3, line 6, leave out clause 3.—*[Dr. Boyson.]*

Clause 4

CONSENTS UNDER SECTION 3

Amendment made: No. 5, in page 4, line 43, leave out clause 4.—*[Dr. Boyson.]*

Clause 7

LAND HELD BY PUBLIC BODIES

Dr. Boyson: I beg to move amendment No. 15 in page 7, line 34, leave out clause 7.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Government amendments Nos. 17 and 18.

Dr. Boyson: These provisions are also the victims of the circumstancess to which I referred casually earlier. The House has a great deal of business to attend to this week and I shall not delay it with improvements to the land register system, important though such improvements undoubtedly are in the long run. However, I put it on record that we shall reintroduce provisions along these lines in the new Parliament.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds South): I have been waiting for a chance to discuss this for a long time. I am certainly not going to delay the House, but I want to put something on record. This clause raised my hopes that at long last something was going to be done about a problem that my constituents have faced for a long time; the problem of gipsies. The gipsies that concern my constituents in the area south of the river in Leeds—I live there—are not real gipsies. They have a lot of money and one sees the television sets and cars without taxation that they have.

The Government responded quickly about a year ago when down in the south of England the television cameras discovered the problem in a different respect. I remember saying in the House then that we had had that problem for 25 years. However, people are not really concerned about the so-called inner-city areas south of the river in Leeds. People do not write to the papers in the same way. There is a problem as to who owns the land and I receive telephone calls when I am in London asking what is going to be done about it.

The officer at Leeds city council who attends to such matters is an overworked man. He does what he can. However, on the day before polling day last week, 30 caravans came into my area. An argument then raged over who owned the land. When the Government introduced this amendment as a response to the southern problem, at least there would be a speedy way of learning who owned the land. It is now very difficult for my constituents and me to learn to whom the land belongs. It might take us a week and a visit to the High Court to find out.

6.30 pm

I raise this matter for the record and I know that the problem affects Manchester. Some of my hon. Friends have spoken to me today and told me that the problem affects other parts of the country. Down in Hunslet—which has been part of my constituency for 24 years—and in Holbeck which is now in Leeds, Central, but was in my constituency and is where I live, the problem is obvious. We must do something about it. We must do something about the smell and the articles that are left when these people leave. I believe that the Minister is aware of the problem. He will be aware of what happened in Fryent way, which I believe is in his constituency. Indeed, I used to know that area very well. The problem there caused a rumpus. However, if the people in Fryent way could see what we have to put up with, the rumpus would have been 50 times louder.

South Leeds has put up with enough. When the Leeds corporation decided that the camping sites had to be spread around the city, there was a terrible outcry. It is all very well for the south of the river to have the lot. As I have said, the River Aire is about the size of the Rhine and the Vistula put together when it comes to getting something done. Very few middle-class people live south of the river. Therefore, it is all very well for the camps to be on the south of the river, as long as the camps are not on their doorsteps.

I have made this intervention to make a point. We can play games about which party will be in power after the election. However, whatever party is in power, I will chase this matter. We have had this problem to my knowledge for 25 years. We must do something about it. We must assist the real gipsies and the real Romanies. However, south of the river we have endured enough of the others, who frighten old ladies, knock on doors, rob and do not pay taxes. The whole of the city of Leeds must bear the burden. Indeed, the whole of the country must bear this burden.

I want an answer on this point. I have spoken to my hon. Friends on the Opposition Front Bench. We must do something about this problem. In a way, I am glad that the outcry in Leeds came from up north of the river. A consultation document proposed that new gipsy encampments should be sited in that area. My goodness, that proposal shifted them. If they had had half the trouble up north of the river that we have had south of the river over

[Mr. Merlyn Rees]

the years, something would have been done. We cannot take action on a narrow political basis. We must take action in recognition of the real problem.

I know Fryent way and the outcry that was created there. I can offer the Minister a solution to the problem. All the senior officers on local authorities, the permanent under-secretary at the Department of the Environment and the deputy secretaries should be made to live in the areas where these problems occur. At the same time, the architects who built some of the houses should be pulled out of goal—where I would have put them a long time ago—and made to live in those areas. My goodness, if that happened they would shift fast enough.

In my final five or six years-plus in this House of Commons, I will be talking about gipsies every day until something is done about the problem. I hope that the Minister will give me a sweet little response even in advance of the election.

Mr. Walter Harrison (Wakefield): As usual, I tried to discover whether I would be in order. I was given advice from my hon. Friends on the Opposition Benches, from hon. Members on Conservative Benches, from the Chair and from behind the Chair. In my last few days before my retirement from this House, I thought that I would go out with a clean bill of health. I decided to consult all my hon. Friends on how to approach this subject. The advice that I was given was to go for an Adjournment debate on my subject. However, when I went to Mr. Speaker's Office, I discovered that I had to go through a procedure that I had been through before. I was suddenly told that the Minister responsible would not play on the Adjournment. So I thought that the best thing to do was to find another approach. Sure enough, I found a solution. After all the advice, I discovered that I could get in in the debate on Government amendment No. 15, despite the advice of some of my hon. Friends.

The amendment applies to clause 7 entitled:

> "Land held by public bodies."

The Local Government Act 1974 created many problems and made many mistakes. It produced local government reorganisation and we have had headaches ever since the 1974 Act was passed. When I had an opportunity to speak about the matter several years later, I stressed that the problem was compounded in 1983. I stressed that the Opposition did not compound the problem. Rather, the Government of the day, who began the mistakes, compounded them. We now end up with the child that the Government conceived, nurtured and developed through local government reorganisation and that child, I believe, is called the metropolitan county council. The Conservative Government conceived those councils, nurtured them and developed them until they were 10 years old and then they strangled them and got rid of them. The Conservatives created the problems in 1974 and 10 years later they strangled the product of those problems.

By strangling the metropolitan county councils, the Government removed a level of representation that the Government had constructed. In doing so, they imposed liabilities on several district councils that those councils had not expected to encounter. What happened? Responsibilities fell on those district councils that those councils had not envisaged when they were set up in 1974. The councils were confronted with those responsibilities.

The metropolitan county councils were selected for abolition while other county councils remained. When it suited the Government they did not get rid of the councils, but when things were going against them they abolished them. So, after abolition, the Government decided to carry out a marvellous privatisation job. Everyone will know that I have tabled early-day motions on this point. I have had consultations with Ministers, I have met residuary body chairmen and I have been like a ping-pong ball going from one side to the other. I was told that it was not the responsibility of the residuary body and then that it was not the Minister's responsibility. I have 152 signatures to my motion—and that figure may have increased today—and only one opponent. I have been through that process and only five minutes ago I spoke to the Minister responsible for removing land, accommodation and a beautiful building in Wakefield about which I am very concerned.

I will fight for that site after I leave the House. Like an old Yorkshire terrier, I will not let go. I may not be a Member of Parliament, but I will be there. Even if I cannot send a direct letter in a pre-paid envelope, my message will come via another method. It will work on the triangle. I will not let go until county hall belongs to the people who owned it in 1898.

I believe that there is a ten-minute job on this debate and I have always been peculiar on time. However, I want to refer to comments made about county hall. I have this calendar.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): Can we see the picture?

Mr. Harrison: Yes, isn't it beautiful? However, the Under-Secretary of State should see the picture of the entrepreneurs. That is a much better picture. The notes attached to the picture state that the site could be sold as a hotel. That is a beautiful picture. I shall pass it round as the Minister is so interested. On the front page it says:

> "The present County Hall was built as headquarters of the former West Riding County Council and was opened in 1898. It was used by that council until local government reorganisation in 1974."

It does not say that that was a mistake. It goes on:

> "Since 1974 it has been used as the headquarters of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council. County Hall was built to the winning design of James Gibson and Samuel Russell, architects, of Gray's Inn Square, London. In their own description the architects describe the style as free English style."

What a marvellous description. What is free about the Government selling it to private enterprise? It goes on to say that it has

> "distinctly English detail. The interior building was finished to such high standard and some of the internal fittings such as the letters of the committee room doors, the elaborate light fittings and switches and some of the plaster work is in the style of art nouveau fashionable at that time."

That is a good description for someone like me from Yorkshire. It goes on:

> "Some of the corridors have dados of green and yellow tiles featuring the West Riding County Council in motion. At the top of the main staircase there are murals in the classic European tradition. There is also much ornamental work symbolising the dates and functions of the former authority, and heraldic work embracing the towns and boroughs of the old West Riding."

The name West Riding has been taken from us and the Government are now taking this West Riding building. That is an imposition on the people of the West Riding.

I decided to look up details of what I could say about Wakefield. The date of this quotation is 1841, before the county hall was built. It says about the area in which county hall is built:

> "On an eminence 'tis built as each visitor knows,
> Where the mercantile Calder's expansive stream flows,
> Its streets are well cornered, lengthy spaces and wide,
> And its buildings are of true architectural pride."

That was written 60 years before the county hall was built.

> "The birds sweetly chant their melodious strain,
> To traverse the beautiful walks we have found
> And enjoy the rich prospects that ere may be found."

That was written by a chap called Thomas Brown and I agree with it. The Minister's mate cannot turn up, because he is fighting for his seat. He told me that he could not be here until the Adjournment.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to take part in the debate. I hope that the Government will look again at county hall and at the land there and conduct a proper appraisal for the benefit of the ratepayers in west Yorkshire.

Mr. Straw: On clause 7 about land held by public bodies, we have heard two speeches about areas in Yorkshire. My right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) may recall that he was the first Member of Parliament with whom I had active contact when I was a student at Leeds university. I know his great city well and I know how, in a sense, it is socially divided between north and south. I share his great concern about the impact of so-called gipsies upon the communities south of the river. I hope that the Minister will be able to respond to the points made by my right hon. Friend.

6.45 pm

My right hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Harrison) made what I suppose may be his valedictory speech in the House. I share his anger about one of the many consequences of the abolition of the metropolitan councils. That abolition desecrated the temples of democracy, the principal county halls of the great counties, including London and west Yorkshire.

I know the county hall in Wakefield. It was built for the operation of local democracy, not to serve Mammon but to serve a higher idea and ideal.The whole country is offended by the idea that that building, which reflected the self-confidence of the west riding at the time that it was built and demonstrated the area's ability to govern itself without too much reference to Whitehall, should now be sold for a mess of pottage to the highest bidder. If this Government are re-elected the hall will never again be used for its proper purpose.

Not even this Government would seek to sell off our cathedrals or abbeys, although I dare say that they will come close to it if they are re-elected. However, they are only too happy to strip away the powers of local people. There is no better or more tangible example of the way that they are doing that than the forced sales of county halls. I know that my right hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield is correct when he says that he will not let this one go—even if he is not in this House.

As my right hon. Friend has made his valedictory speech in the House, it is appropriate for me to record the debt of gratitude that all my right hon. and hon. Friends owe to our right hon. Friend for his unique contribution in helping to maintain the Labour Government between 1974 and 1979. That Government governed well without, for some time, any visible means of support. They managed to pull off that magical trick not least because of the activities of my right hon. Friend. It is fortunate that there is a 30-year rule, because I have heard about parts of the role played by my right hon. Friend. The stories defy the imagination and perhaps should best be left under wraps. Suffice it to say that he maintained a majority for the Government for over five years. That is to his lasting credit.

I hope that in the spirit of goodwill in which we have approached this Bill the Minister will take the chance now to announce that he will reprieve county hall.

Dr. Boyson: The right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) rightly took the opportunity presented by these clauses and amendments to bring to the attention of the House the problems that obviously exist on the south side of Leeds and from which his constituents are suffering. I do not have knowledge of that area, but if the right hon. Gentleman would speak or write to me I shall be delighted to see what can be done to help.

For a while the right hon. Gentleman lived near to me. The Fryent way area is in my constituency. It has suffered terrible destruction and there has been uproar. The problems have occurred south of the river in Leeds and north of the river in Brent. I am aware of the problems that arise, and before or after the general election I should like to write or speak to the right hon. Gentleman to see what can be done.

I have considerable sympathy with one of his points, that the people who made the decisions should live in those areas. That applies to many of the tower blocks in London, including those in my constituency. One rarely sees the architects who get the prizes for that sort of thing living on the 17th floor and trying to get a lift that works, either to take them down or to enable their aged parents to get up. It would be a good thing if not only the people who built them but the people who gave permission for them to be built and the people in architectural magazines who give them the prizes, knew the old saying about the toad knowing where the harrow cuts. That would give them experience of what the people who live there have to suffer.

I know the strength of feeling of the right hon. Member for Wakefield and his loyalty to his county and to Wakefield, which he has served for so long at borough and county level, and now in Parliament. Indeed, I know the county hall there. In fact, I knew it when Sir Alec Clegg was the chief educational officer in Yorkshire. He will be known to all right hon. and hon. Members. Although he and I were on different wings of the educational spectrum at that time—*[Interruption.]* I must not divert or be misled by the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), otherwise we shall be discussing the future of Blackburn Rovers again. At least Burnley football club has now saved itself, and the prayers of all Lancastrians here were answered by the saving goal in the Birmingham match last Saturday—*[Interruption.]* Yes, if they had 14,000 every time they would be back in the first division and leading the League.

Mr. Roland Boyes (Houghton and Washington): If the power of the Minister's prayer will save Burnley, will he save Sunderland on Thursday?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman should not give me such unpleasant thoughts.

Dr. Boyson: It is probably fitting to raise that matter, because I believe that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker are, like myself, a Methodist lay preacher, so this is the right time for the hon. Gentleman to bring this to the attention of the Chair, as well as myself as the Minister at the Dispatch Box.

Returning to Yorkshire, I was paying tribute to the late Sir Alec Clegg. On the educational spectrum, he was a discovery method man, when I wanted traditional education, and at his request I regularly put my case on Saturday mornings to the head teachers of Yorkshire's primary and secondary schools.

I also know Lancashire county hall well. I did years of research there during school holidays, when I was researching Lancashire's economic history.

The right hon. Member for Wakefield has seen myself and my colleague, the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, the hon. Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope) and has written to us about the Wakefield county hall in the West Riding. The residuary body has put that splendid building up for sale. Incidentally I especially enjoyed the poem by Thomas Brown which the right hon. Gentleman read to the House.

Wakefield has put in a bid for that building but no decision has yet been made about it. When the right hon. Gentleman saw my hon. Friend and me about this matter he brought to our attention the fact that it is not only the sale that is important; the way in which the building is maintained is important also. We have passed that fact on to the residuary body. Obviously, the matter is not a temporary one because the building is the pride of the area and whoever takes on the building must be able to maintain it. It would be a disaster if such a unique building were destroyed.

I appreciate the strength of feeling shown by the right hon. Member for Wakefield on this matter. He has always been courteous to me, even to a Lancastrian from the other side of the Pennines. As the right hon. Gentleman knows, local government servants have served his father, myself, and indeed the right hon. Gentleman. I can say no more about that now, but I shall pass on everything that he has said this evening.

Mr. Merlyn Rees: My right hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Harrison) is of Wakefield and I am of Leeds and, in a sense, ne'er the twain shall meet, but we are both part of Yorkshire.

I visited police headquarters the other day. I ask the Minister to consider that a great deal of money could be saved for the police department. I believe that this point has been made before. However, as someone with an interest in the police, I know that step would save money. Perhaps that means that the Treasury will consider it with greater interest and sympathy than it would otherwise do.

Dr. Boyson: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for that intervention. We are aware of that matter and it has been passed on. There is a police need and one cannot say more than that there will be serious consideration which could be influential on that decision.

I end by saying to the right hon. Member for Wakefield that this is probably the last time that I shall reply to him in this House. I should like to pay tribute to him for his long service, and not necessarily only for keeping the Labour party in government between 1974 and 1979 which, towards the end, was a great achievement. Nobody can say that the right hon. Gentleman is not a character who knows and speaks his own mind. I say "character" in the best sense of that word. If the House became merely a collection of men who—I do not mention Whips here because there can be characters among Whips as well; in fact, at least one of my hon. Friends has been a Whip and is still a character, after leaving the Whips' Office, just as he was before—but if the House became a collection of individuals who simply said yes and no when told to do so, and who did not come here to represent the feelings of the people among whom they have been born, this place would be worse than it is. Therefore, on behalf of all my right hon. and hon. Friends, I should like to pay a genuine tribute to the right hon. Member for Wakefield, whom we shall miss.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7

LAND HELD BY PUBLIC BODIES.

Amendment made: No. 15, in page 7, line 34, leave out Clause 7.—*[Dr. Boyson.]*

Clause 8

FINANCE

Amendment made: No. 16, in page 7, line 43, leave out Clause 8.—*[Dr. Boyson.]*

Schedule 1

AMENDMENTS OF PART VIII OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PLANNING AND LAND ACT 1980

Dr. Boyson: I beg to move Government amendment No. 7, in page 9, leave out lines 21 to 26.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, we shall take Government amendment No. 10.

Dr. Boyson: It gives me considerable pleasure to move this amendment because when the Bill was in Committee, there was good feeling, as there was on Second Reading. I said then that we would look most carefully at the two amendments that had been tabled by the Opposition to see whether we could absorb the intention behind them so that they could become part of the Bill and, indeed, strengthen it.

In Committee, the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) proposed an amendment to section 80A(1), which was offered as a direct and honest attempt to improve the drafting of the Bill. I appreciated the fact that those amendments were either probing or improving amendments throughout. I have examined their proposals carefully—and they were genuine proposals in which there was no Trojan horse. They were simply attempts to improve the Bill. Therefore, I am happy to bring that amendment forward myself and to commend it to the House. Indeed, so good is the amendment that I should like the House to accept a similar change in the wording of section 80(1) to ensure that the two provisions remain on all fours with one another.

Mr. Straw: Indeed, there is no Trojan horse in this amendment, which started life as amendment No. 3 in

Committee on 12 March. This part of the Bill is so technical and obtuse that if there had been a Trojan horse, none of us would have spotted it.

We are grateful to the Minister for taking account of the points that we made and are glad that he has brought forward the amendments.

Amendment agreed to.

Dr. Boyson: I beg to move Government amendment No. 8, in page 12, line 15, leave out 'In section 78(1)*(a)*' and insert

'(1) In subsection (1)*(a)* of section 78'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, we shall take Government amendments Nos. 9 and 11.

Dr. Boyson: If one can go forward in the same spirit of co-operation, I should like to move this amendment. In Committee, the Opposition put forward a two-part amendment and I should like to commend both elements of it to the House, although I promised previously to consider only one. Therefore, I am happy to spell out that directions may be amended or revoked, and that a direction-making power carries with it a power to amend or revoke. It will do no harm to spell that out as was requested by the Opposition.

On reflection, I have concluded that Opposition Members were right to suggest also that in an area as technical as valuation, prior consultation would be desirable. Therefore, I invite the House to accept an amendment to that effect.

7 pm

Mr. Straw: As the Minister has made clear, this matter was raised in Committee on what was amendment No. 34, and debated on 17 March. Again, we are grateful to the Minister for looking carefully at what we sought to say and for introducing the amendments in this way.

Obviously, consultation is of great importance to local authorities and their representative associations. The powers contained in clause 1 are potentially wide-ranging in effect. They deal with deferred and advance purchase schemes, of which much has been written in the press. We acknowledge that within the scheme in the Bill the regulation is bound to be technical and complex, but precisely because of that it is important that, wherever possible, local authorities should have the opportunity to be consulted about regulations before they are introduced.

Last July the Secretary of State announced his intention to take powers to regulate advance and deferred purchase schemes by legislation on or after midnight, 22 July 1986. Local authorities have been acting as if that was law, prudently taking account of the prospect of legislation. Although we had serious reservations about the operation of clause 1, given that authorities have already acted as if it were law, we believe it would add to uncertainty if we sought at this stage to block clause 1 and its attendant effects.

We are glad that, as a consequence of discussions yesterday, we have been able to improve the way in which the Bill will operate for local authorities.

Dr. Boyson: With the leave of the House I shall reply. The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) referred to clause 1, which is linked with schedule 1 on which we had conversation yesterday. As this afternoon we have had poetry by Thomas Brown from the right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Harrison), in reply I must quote my doggerel, particularly as today is Edward Lear's birthday and I have the "Oxford Book of Light Verse" with me:

There once was a doctor of Brent,
Who said: "Some Councils have spent
Far too much. If alas
This amendment should pass,
We should all have great cause to lament."

I offer that to the House in the spirit in which we conducted our proceedings in Committee.

Mr. Straw: With the leave of the House I shall reply. I should make it clear that that piece of doggerel was prepared for an amendment which, in the event, we did not move. I think that the Minister would be upset if the House took its advice on the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 9, in page 12, line 20, at end insert—

'(2) Subsection (2) of that section (power to vary or revoke directions) shall be omitted.'.

No. 10, in page 12, leave out lines 39 to 43.

No. 11, in page 13, line 50, at end insert—

'6. In section 85 of that Act (supplementary provisions for Part VIII), after subsection (1) there shall be inserted the following subsections—

"(1A) Before giving any direction under section 80(6A) or 80A(5) above the Secretary of State shall consult such associations of authorities as appear to him to be concerned and any authority with whom consultation appears to him to be desirable.

(1B) Any power of the Secretary of State to give directions under this Part of this Act shall include power to vary or revoke a direction given in exercise of that power.".'.—*[Dr. Boyson.]*

Schedule 2

LAND HELD BY PUBLIC BODIES

Amendment made: No. 17, in page 14, line 1, leave out schedule 2.—*[Dr. Boyson.]*

Title

Amendments made: No. 18, in title, line 1, leave out 'Parts VIII and X' and insert 'Part VIII'.

No. 19, in line 2, leave out

'to authorise and regulate the provision of financial assistance by local authorities for certain housing purposes'.—*[Dr. Boyson.]*

Order for Third Reading read.

7.3 pm

Dr. Boyson: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) for bringing to the attention of the House the fact that my doggerel was linked with an amendment that was withdrawn. I would hate to have torpedoed the Bill at the last moment. Gratuitous humour is always somewhat dangerous and I am grateful for his help.

Clause 1 and schedule 1 of the Bill, as amended, contain provisions to prevent authorities using advance and deferred purchase schemes to avoid the Government's capital expenditure controls and store up major financial liabilities for the future.

I announced in Committee details of the exemptions from the provisions in the Bill. All authorities in England and Wales will be able to use deferred purchase schemes to finance one project each, up to £3 million in cost,

[Dr. Boyson]

beginning in any one period of five consecutive years. We shall make the necessary regulations as soon as possible after Parliament reassembles.

In addition, all authorities will be able to continue to carry out their "building under licence" and "improvement under licence" housing schemes. Without this exemption, a number of housing projects were likely to be prevented or at least delayed in the period before Royal Assent. For this reason, we decided that the exemption should be backdated to 23 July 1986, the date on which these provisions of the Bill come into effect.

The remainder of the Bill deals with education pooling. First, there is a technical amendment to the provision which allows for an adjustment between England and Wales. Then we have a provision to allow my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science to recalculate allocations from the advanced further education pool for 1981-82 in the manner originally intended. These provisions are uncontroversial and have the agreement of the local authority associations and of all parties in the House.

This is a short Bill, and it gives me pleasure to commend it to the House.

7.5 pm

Mr. Straw: In early October last year, the Secretary of State for the Environment made a speech at the Conservative party conference which was the only one that failed to achieve a standing ovation.

Mr. Steve Norris (Oxford, East): So did I.

Mr. Straw: The hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris) also made a speech which failed to achieve a standing ovation. I did not know that he had much in common with the Secretary of State, but I am glad that he at least has that in common. *[Interruption.]* Perhaps he is talking about the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten) — [HON. MEMBERS: "Bristol, West."] — and, indeed, the hon. Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave). Those two certainly received standing ovations, but I was talking about their boss, the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley), who failed to receive a standing ovation. I remember because I had the painful pleasure of listening to his every word on television—something that I shall not repeat next year.

In that speech the Secretary of State promised to introduce a mountainous local government Bill which would privatise almost every local authority service; introduce major provisions to outlaw contract compliance even in respect of ensuring fair wages and equal opportunities for women and ethnic minorities; strengthen the powers of the local government ombudsman; and do everything mentioned in this Bill.

Nine months later the mountainous Bill has turned out to be a little pimple. Even the heart of the Bill has now been removed, apart from clause 1. The Bill left Committee [illegible] 2 April. If the Government had had any confidence or faith in it, it could have passed through this House before Easter and through the other place in the condition in which it left Committee. It is now a truncated measure.

The Minister was right to say that we supported clauses 5 and 6 which dealt with the arcane aspect of the operation of the further education pool. All of us have at least discovered that there is a rolling process to cap the pool —a further sign of the way in which the Department of Education and Science murders the English language in its regulation of the education system.

I have already put on record our attitude to clause 1. The Secretary of State referred to his hope that Harrogate would not go the same way as Haringey on deferred purchase schemes. Our research shows that the reverse is true; that Haringey has a long way to go before it reaches the indebtedness that Harrogate has achieved in building various conference centres. Its assets to debt ratio, which the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with his banking background, tells me is a good indicator, is far more unsatisfactorily geared than Haringey's.

We acknowledge that, for the reasons I have spelt out, not the least of which is to remove uncertainty, it is better that clause 1 should be on the statute book than not.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Diplomatic and Consular Premises Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

7.9 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The Bill concerns the acquisition and disposal of diplomatic premises in the United Kingdom. It would meet four separate needs. First, it would prevent missions from setting up offices in sensitive parts of the capital; for example, near the Palace of Westminster or the royal palaces in the Mall area. Secondly, the Bill would deal with the problem of empty former diplomatic premises by acquiring title to them and then selling them. Thirdly, the Bill would allow diplomatic status to be removed from premises which are being misused. Fourthly, the Bill would allow the Government to retaliate in kind if an overseas Government insisted that we move from existing premises or withheld consent for the acquisition of new premises.

Those powers would bring the United Kingdom into line with the laws and practices of many other countries, including the United States of America. The Government regard the powers in the Bill as being fully consistent with their obligations under the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations. The Government consider that the Bill is a modest but useful measure. I commend the Bill to the House.

7.11 pm

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): I have no wish to delay consideration of the Bill or the House's progress on other more contentious issues. The Opposition will give a fair wind to the Bill, none of whose provisions are of any contention. The Bill will tidy up a grey area and, in that sense, it is useful and should be welcomed. I refer only to the situation that may arise if England and Wales were to impose the poll tax according to the model proposed for Scotland. The provisions of the Vienna convention mean that diplomatic premises do not attract normal rates or local taxes, but notional payments are made by the Government on behalf of the diplomatic premises in lieu of rates. Many newspaper headlines over the years have referred to the failure of Governments to pay their rates.

The question may arise, if the poll tax were introduced in England and Wales, as to what amount would be paid by embassies. Would the amount be levied on the total number of diplomats accredited to the mission? Would all diplomatic premises attract the poll tax in an equal quantity? Would the missions be reduced by proportionate amounts so as to avoid increased taxation by the Government on their behalf? Have these matters, such as those in the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. (Scotland) Bill, been left indeterminate for the bureaucratic jungle and a nightmare to catch up with after the event?

Mr. Eggar: I appreciate the support of the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. George Robertson) for the Bill which, as he said, is a modest but important step in the right direction towards clearing up a grey area. I am delighted that the hon. Member has turned his mind to problems which may occur after the election. The hon. Gentleman is nothing if not honest about the prospects of his party winning a majority in the coming election. The hon. Gentleman referred to the Scottish Bill which, we hope, will pass through the House in the next two days and which provides for the continued application of rates to office premises; therefore, consular premises will continue to be assessed for rates. However, diplomatic missions will pay only that element of the rates from which they are deemed to derive benefit under a net-back system. The question of what will happen when the poll tax is introduced is, of course, one for further consideration.

Question put and agree to.

Bill read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House—[Mr. Lennox-Boyd].

Further proceedings postponed, pursuant to Order [this day].

DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR PREMISES BILL *[MONEY]*

Queen's recommendation having been signified — Resolved.

That, for the purpose of any Act resulting from the Diplomatic and Consular Premises Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any expenses incurred under that Act by the Secretary of State.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR PREMISES BILL

Considered in Committee; reported, without amendment, read the Third time and passed.

Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Bill *[Lords]*

Consideration of Lords amendments to Commons amendments.

New Clause 1

ENTERTAINMENT LICENCES: REMOVAL OF CERTAIN EXEMPTIONS

Lords amendment: No. 1, in line 1, leave out from beginning to "the" in line 3.

7.18 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the amendment to the Commons amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this amendment we will consider Lords amendment No. 2.

Mr. Neil Thorne (Ilford, South): I should be grateful for the assistance of my hon. Friend on three points. First, should there not be an "or" at the end of the last line of the amendment, so that it will read correctly? Secondly, is the removal of the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket intended to be temporary? Thirdly, would this mean that the Theatre Royal would be in the same position as a private club, which my hon. Friend will remember are in a special category? I have in mind, for example, the Queensway ice rink which does not have to have adequate provision for first aid facilities, particularly for the St. John Ambulance Brigade and others to carry out their important tasks, because the people who attend those places are considered to be in a separate class, unlike employees and the general public. Can my hon. Friend give me guidance on those three points?

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My hon. Friend has raised three points. As to "or", I do not know, but I hope that he is wrong. As to whether it is temporary, that depends on the Government's legislative programme in the next Parliament or thereafter, but clearly there is an anomaly and I am against anomalies. As regards private clubs, the law is highly complex, as it is for the Theatre Royal, Haymarket which comes into a group of premises which are covered by such extraordinary things as licence of the Crown and letters patent, so I shall not give a comprehensive or even considered reply to my hon. Friend from the Dispatch Box today. However, he has raised an important and interesting point, about which I shall write to him.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 1 and 2 agreed to.

Housing (Scotland) Bill *[Lords]*

7.20 pm

The Solicitor-General for Scotland (Mr. Peter Fraser): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

This is a consolidation measure which consolidates certain enactments relating to housing in Scotland and incorporates amendments to give effect to certain recommendations of the Scottish Law Commission. Apart from those amendments the Bill makes no change in the existing law.

The Bill has been considered by the Joint Committee on Consolidation of Bills, and it will be recollected that its proceedings were reported to the House by my hon. Friend the Member for Holland with Boston (Sir R. Body). The Joint Committee said that there was no point to which the attention of Parliament should be drawn, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House. —*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Bill immediately considered in Committee; reported, without amendments; read the Third time, and passed, without amendment.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

Resolved,

That the draft Parliamentary Constituencies (England) (Miscellaneous Changes) (No. 2) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 30th April, be approved. — *[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Terms and Conditions of Employment

7.23 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): I beg to move,

That the draft Employment Subsidies Act 1978 (Renewal) (Great Britain) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 6 May, be approved.

This is the sixth occasion on which the House has been asked to extend the powers of the Employment Subsidies Act 1978 which are due to expire on 30 June 1987. The order extends the provisions for a further 18 months, which is the maximum length permitted by the Act.

Three schemes are currently operated under the Act—the young workers scheme, the new workers scheme and jobshare, formerly the job splitting scheme. However, the young workers scheme closed for applications on 31 March 1986 and it is expected that all payments due to employers under this scheme will have ceased by 30 June 1987 when this order expires. The new workers scheme, which is a replacement for, and a development of, the young workers scheme, was announced by the Chancellor in his Budget statement on 18 March 1986 and commenced on 1 April that year.

If this order is not approved, my Department will be unable to accept new applications under the new workers scheme or jobshare after 30 June 1987.

The new workers scheme has two important and related aims—to encourage more job opportunities for under-21-year-olds at realistic rates of pay, and to complement YTS. We believe that young inexperienced people will continue to be at a disadvantage in securing jobs if their pay is not only consistent with that paid to a more experienced, older worker, but moreover represents an inordinate progression from YTS training allowances.

By encouraging employers to pay realistic rates of pay to young people we can contribute to the reduction of labour costs and so help employers to improve their competitiveness. In this way, employers will be better able to expand their businesses and create more job opportunities for both young and older workers.

For jobs starting on or after 1 June this year, the new scheme conditions announced on 6 May will apply. The scheme will only be open to 18, 19 and 20-year-olds who are in their first year of employment. In addition, the wage ceiling for 18 and 19-year-olds will be raised by £5 to £60 gross a week. The wage ceiling for 20-year-olds will remain at £65 gross a week. Proof of YTS completion will no longer be necessary and we believe that this will remove what was a major source of discontent to users in the first year of the scheme.

Where all the conditions of the scheme are met. Employers will continue to receive £15 a week for up to 52 weeks in respect of every full-time permanent job supported. We anticipate that these important changes will encourage employers who are already using the scheme to use it again, and those who have previously been unable or unwilling to take advantage of the scheme to look at it afresh. In this financial year we hope to support well over 25,000 jobs for young people under the scheme.

The job splitting scheme was introduced in January 1983 to help employers provide part-time job opportunities for unemployed people by encouraging more flexible working arrangements. From 1 April 1987 the scheme was relaunched by me in Manchester as jobshare and some changes were made to the eligibility rules and to the grant given to employers. Those changes were announced to the House on 6 April 1987.

Jobshare allows employers to create new part-time jobs by three methods. First, it divides an existing full-time job, in addition to the holder of the full-time job being split. Those eligible to be recruited are people claiming at unemployment benefit office, under notice of redundancy or leaving a particular Government scheme but who have not been employed since. The second method is to create two new part-time jobs. Eligibility in this case is confined to people leaving particular Government schemes who have not been employed since. The third and final method is to combine regular overtime hours of up to 10 employees to create a new part-job. Those who can be recruited under this method are the same as for the first method that I have described.

Under the job-splitting scheme, the Department of Employment provided a grant of £840 to meet an employer's administrative and training costs. The Department has increased this grant to £1,000 for those employers participating in jobshare. The grant is paid in three instalments — £500 when the application is approved, £200 at the end of 26 weeks and £300 at the end of the year.

We continue to believe that jobshare can provide a number of potential long-term benefits to participants. For example, higher productivity, particularly in areas of routine work, more flexible use of working time, improved job satisfaction, lower staff turnover and absences, and cover for off-the-job training. It encourages employers to devise more flexible working patterns through a better utilisation of manpower, greater efficiency and improved competitiveness, thereby helping to reduce unemployment. It also offers employers an opportunity to build up a pool of trained labour to meet the future expansion of their companies.

The advantages of jobshare for individuals will, of course vary according to their circumstances. Not everyone necessarily wants a full-time job and this scheme provides scope to tailor part-time jobs to an individual's needs.

Although a job splitting scheme ran for over four years, its take-up was limited and only about 250 people were on the scheme at any one time. Recent research showed a lack of awareness amongst employers about the scheme. It is hoped that the changes that have been made under jobshare, combined with increased marketing, will achieve more positive results. My Department expects to approve 1,000 application under jobshare this year.

I commend the Order to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Employment Subsidies Act 1978 (Renewal) (Great Britain) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 6th May, be approved.

PARLIAMENTARY AND OTHER PENSIONS BILL

Resolved,

That Standing Committee A be discharged from considering the Parliamentary and Other Pensions Bill and that the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Committee tomorrow.

CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL *[Lords]*

Resolved,

That Standing Committee D be discharged from considering those provisions of the Consumer Protection Bill *[Lords]* which have not been considered by that Committee and that those provisions be committed to a Committee of the whole House, and that the Chairman do now report to the House those provisions of the Bill, the consideration of which has been completed by that Committee, and that on being reported from the Committee of the whole House, the Bill, including those provisions reported from the Standing Committee, may be taken into consideration as amended without any Question being put.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Committee tomorrow.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Resolved,

That, in respect of the Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Bill *[Lords]*, Notices of Amendments, new Clauses and new Schedules to be moved in Committee may be accepted by the Clerks at the Table before the Bill has been read a second time.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Resolved,

That, at tomorrow's sitting, the provisions of paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 54 (Consolidated Fund Bills) shall apply to proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill as if the Second Reading of the Bill stood as first Order of the day.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

ESTIMATES

Resolved,

That a sum, not exceeding £59,571,457,000 be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to complete or defray the charges for Defence and Civil Services for the year ending on 31st March 1988, as set out in House of Commons Papers Nos. 192, 227, 238 and 369. — *[Mr. Norman Lamont.]*

Bill ordered to be brought in upon the foregoing resolution by the Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. John MacGregor, Mr. Norman Lamont, Mr. Ian Stewart and Mr. Peter Brooke.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (APPROPRIATION) BILL

Mr. Norman Lamont accordingly presented a Bill to supply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the year ending on 31 March 1988 to appropriate the supplies granted in this Session of Parliament, and to repeal certain Consolidated Fund and Appropriation Acts: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 116.]

Youth Unemployment (Rother Valley)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

7.31 pm

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): I am pleased that Members on both Front Benches have got through the business and reached the important matter of my Adjournment debate.

As you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, well know, the Rother Valley constituency is in the heartland of south Yorkshire — a once thriving industrial region which helped to create the wealth of this nation but which has not reaped the benefits of that wealth, as is plain to see when one looks around the area today. Most of the constituency is in the Rotherham and Mexborough travel-to-work area, which has one of the highest levels of unemployment in Britain and where more than 45 per cent. of those out of work have been jobless for more than a year.

Of the three parliamentary constituencies in the Rotherham metropolitan borough, Rother Valley has the lowest percentage recorded unemployment, but when one considers the percentage share of youth unemployment in each of the seven wards a grim picture is painted of the lives of many young people. In Thurcroft and Whiston ward, 33·1 per cent. of the unemployed are under the age of 25. In St. John's ward, the figure is 33·4 per cent., in Anston and Woodsetts and in Brinsworth, Catcliffe and Treeton it is 33·6 per cent., in Maltby 33·8 per cent., in Kiveton Park 35·3 per cent. and in Aston, Orgreave and Ulley 35·6 per cent. There is a total of 2,149 registered unemployed under the age of 25. In January this year, the total number of unemployed in the constituency was 6,297, of whom 43·5 per cent. were long-term unemployed, so 2,756 people had not had a job for more than 12 months. As youth unemployment accounts for a good 30 per cent. of the total, it is clear that many hundreds of young people have not had a job for a considerable time.

Those figures include only registered unemployed. They do not include the many hundreds of young people on youth training schemes and community programmes within the borough.

The main reason for the high levels of unemployment is the rundown in the regional and local economies. The 1981 census listed the Rother Valley constituency in the top 50 with the highest level of manufacturing industry, but many small manufacturers have been hit by the worsening state of the economy in the past eight years. Compared with 1978-79, manufacturing investment in the region is down by £190 million. It is clear that the local economy has suffered greatly when this is combined with high interest rates, the fall in manufacturing output and increased manufactured imports, and companies have not been able to take on young people as trainees or apprentices in what was regarded as the normal way in the 1960s and 1970s.

Two of the region's largest industries—steel and coal —which were once a major source of job opportunities for young people, have also suffered catastrophic reductions. Since 1979, two coal mines in the constituency have closed and thousands of jobs have been lost in neighbouring mines as a direct result of Government policy towards the coal industry.

Sad to say, only yesterday a further 200 job losses were announced at Treeton colliery in my constituency which is to be reduced to a single face colliery. That means not just the loss of 200 jobs but the loss of 200 future job opportunities for young people. There has also been a massive reduction in the Sheffield and Rotherham steel making and engineering works in the past 10 years. That has greatly affected the job opportunities for young people. I remember that when I came out of secondary modern school in 1962 I was offered a craft apprenticeship with the National Coal Board or a job in the steel works. There are no such opportunities for any of the young people now.

The Government's response has not been to seek to arrest the decline. Instead, regional aid has been cut so that there was £37·4 million less in 1985-86 than in 1978-79. With that amount of money being taken away from the region, we have not been able to create or hold job opportunities for young people.

There has, however, been some investment in the constituency. There has been massive investment in Maltby colliery as a result of the Labour Government's "Plan for Coal" which was agreed in 1976, but there are fewer people working there now than when I was employed there before the 1983 general election. It is all very well to say that millions, or even billions, of pounds have been pumped into the coal industry in capital investment, but in terms of job creation the result may be negative rather than positive.

Nearly half the people working at Maltby colliery have transferred from neighbouring collieries which have closed. In the past four years, not one young person has been taken on at the mine, although at one time it played a major role in employing young people in the area and one went there only if there were no other jobs in the local economy. Indeed, it was the lack of opportunities for young people that created the 1984-85 miners' strike, but the Government failed to listen, and by shutting their ears to what the mining communities were saying they allowed the situation to get worse.

The Government's answer to the high level of unemployment among young people has been the introduction of training schemes — initially the youth opportunities programme, then the youth training scheme and now the job training scheme—but the majority of young people remain unemployed after going through these schemes. The latest available Manpower Services Commission figures show that of those finishing or leaving youth training schemes in the Rotherham area between April 1985 and April 1986, only 17·9 per cent. found jobs with the employer with whom they had trained, despite the Government's initial assurances that the proportion would be far higher, 14 per cent. found jobs with other employers and 3·8 per cent. found part-time jobs. A further 7·8 per cent. went on to other youth training schemes, 2·7 per cent. went on to full-time education courses and 47·5 per cent. became unemployed. The Government have failed to face the fact that jobs once held by permanent employees are being carried out by a succession of young people on Government training schemes while permanent jobs for young people disappear.

Training schemes are not the answer to the problems of young people in Rother Valley in finding work. Schemes may be the answer for some young people, but they are an obstruction for others. In many parts of my constituency jobs being done by young people on Government training schemes were done five years ago by 16, 17 and 18-year-olds. People should not say that training schemes are there for work experience. They are stopping people getting jobs in my constituency.

While some young people in the constituency are taking part in good youth training courses run by charities like Community Industry and by the local authorities, there is no way in which they can compete with the skilled people who are being made redundant. It is often forgotten that when there are redundancies many experienced people are thrown on the dole queues. In the borough of Rotherham itself, for every job vacancy there are 68 people in the dole queue to take it up and many more not registered who are also looking for work.

The majority of young people in my constituency have been the victims of the Government's cynical economic experiment, which has failed both nationally and regionally. It is no good Ministers at the Dispatch Box or Tory Members talking about efficiency and making people stand on their own two feet. What chance does a 16-year-old school leaver from a family that is already disadvantaged because of unemployment have of ever being able to stand on his or her own two feet in such circumstances as I have described in many households in my constituency?

Last July, over 2,800 young people aged 16 left schools in Rotherham borough; 89 per cent. of them did not have a proper job. In other words, in July of last year over 2,400 young people were unemployed straight from school. Most of them are on training schemes although a few have got jobs. When we consider the hundreds of young people at comprehensive schools throughout the constituency who will be eligible to leave at 16 and who will be coming on to the dole queues and training schemes in July of this year, we see that the problem is getting worse.

The Government cannot claim that this has come as a surprise. Yet in the eight years during which we have watched the problem develop, the Government have not attempted to find a solution. They should have made an education allowance to 16-year-old students in comprehensive schools to enable them to benefit from further education without feeling that they were a burden on already disadvantaged families. My experience of my surgeries and of my postbag is that people are resentful of the fact that no education allowance is made to help their children get further education. As a consequence, children leave school at 16 to look for money from supplementary benefit or from training schemes. The Government have singularly failed to prevent young people going on the dole queue or into training schemes by not providing an education allowance.

On 11 June, thousands of young people will be voting for the first time. The few whose families have benefited from the tax cuts made by the Government over the last seven years will no doubt support Tory candidates. I am not so sure about those whose time has been wasted on the dole queues. I hope that the voices of that majority of young men and women will be heard rejecting the Government's policies, which have left many areas like my constituency with a gaping hole instead of opportunities for young people to get jobs and lead normal lives. Because they cannot find work, many young people cannot get married and lead the sort of life that most people in these communities have lived for generations.

The Government have failed to do anything to stop the growing tide of youth unemployment in my area and in the surrounding regions. I hope that on 11 June people will

[Mr. Kevin Barron]

decide that no longer will they have a Government who are prepared to let young people waste their lives as is happening in Rother Valley.

7.44 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): I congratulate the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) on his success in securing this debate and on providing an opportunity for us to discuss youth employment. I have listened carefully to what he has said. I think I can start my reply by making three points on which I hope we will be in a fair measure of agreement.

First, I fully accept that the hon. Gentleman's constituency lies in an area which faces problems of industries in historic decline—like mining and steel—which make the task of adjusting to new world market conditions more intractable and painful than in many other areas. The overall unemployment count in the Rotherham and Mexborough travel-to-work area of 22,929 and the rate of unemployment at 21·9 per cent. put that beyond debate.

Secondly, unemployment hits young people—newcomers to the labour market—particularly hard and it must therefore continue to be the highest priority to improve their prospects of jobs.

Thirdly, while youth unemployment has its features which require a specific response, the job prospects of young people are very much influenced by wider economic developments and Government measures. Young people will therefore benefit from the progress we are making in creating the conditions for faster economic growth and from the new jobs which are being created.

I shall return to these wider matters if time allows, but I should first like to say a little about changes in the levels of youth unemployment. My main point is that nationally there is a clearly marked downward trend. In January 1986 there were 187,000 claimants aged under 18; this year there are 25,000 fewer. Over the three years to January 1987, if we look at total unemployed young people aged under 25, there is a reduction of 127,000, from 1,259,700 to 1,132,700.

Of those unemployed young people aged under 25 there has been a fall of over 80,000 in the past year to January and over 120,000 in the last two years. The unemployment rate for the under-25s is now 18 per cent.—lower than the EC average of 21 per cent., and much lower than Italy at 35 per cent. or France at 24 per cent.

These encouraging trends, I have to say, are not so clearly established in the Rother Valley area. But there is some progress. In the Rotherham travel-to-work area the number of unemployed people aged 18 and under fell by over 400 between January 1986 and January 1987, and in the wider region of Yorkshire and Humberside there were about 8,000 fewer unemployed people aged under 25 in this year compared with last. I very much hope these changes point to further improvement.

Further progress depends not on the Government alone, but the Government have their part to play. They have to continue particularly with their investment in young people, both to improve their employment prospects and to provide a skilled work force for the future of our industry.

I would like now to outline some of the specific measures we operate for our young people. At school level, it is the aim of the technical and vocational education initiative to prepare young people for the world of work by increasing the relevance and practical content of the curriculum, developing motivation, initiative, and problem-solving skills, providing work experience, and establishing links with local employers.

As hon. Members know, TVEI began on a pilot basis in 1983 and experience of the pilots was so encouraging in terms of the enthusiasm of teachers, parents and children alike, that we took the decision last year to extend the scheme into a national initiative, from which all 14 to 18-year-olds in maintained schools will be able to benefit. We shall be spending some £900 million on the national scheme over the next 10 years.

TVEI is, of course, voluntary, and Rotherham was one of the tiny minority of mainly Labour-controlled local education authorities which opted not to take part in the pilot phase. I am glad to say that it has now submitted a proposal for a three-year preparatory phase with a view to subsequent participation in a full extension. I hope for a successful conclusion of discussions so that TVEI will begin in Rotherham in September 1987 and the local authority will be able to take up the £5·25 million offered to enhance the education of its children.

A large and growing proportion of our young people are now being helped by YTS. A third of a million young people are now currently training on YTS; without YTS many of them would be unemployed. YTS is playing a central role in helping young people to gain skills, work experience and qualifications which increase their self-confidence as young adults and give them a better chance of employment. By giving young people the opportunity to train in the particular skills that are needed today—in new technology, for example—YTS is helping to bridge the skills gap which has bedevilled our industry for so long; and in helping industry to gain the skilled and enterprising young people it needs, we are helping industry to thrive and to create the jobs of the future.

Every 16 and 17-year-old unemployed school-leaver is now guaranteed a place on a YTS scheme. This means that no one under 18 need remain unemployed. This is an outstanding achievement of which the Government and providers of training can be proud. The Government are demonstrating their commitment to youth training by spending £1,000 million a year on YTS. Employers have been prepared to make a substantial and growing financial contribution because they recognise the benefits that YTS brings.

Nationally, about 60 per cent. of YTS trainees find employment soon after leaving, and many stay on with the same firm as regular employees. But there are bound to be regional variations in the picture, depending on the buoyancy of local labour markets.

The employment pattern in Rother Valley is obviously very difficult and this is reflected in below-average numbers of trainees finding work, although their situation is showing signs of improvement. The introduction of the new two-year YTS programme last year means that the young people of Rother Valley are now enjoying a longer period of high quality training with more practical work experience and off-the-job training. I have every hope that these substantial imrovements in the YTS training programme will result in a significant increase in the number of YTS trainees who move directly into work.

If young people are to take advantage of the opportunities on offer, they need realistic and well-informed careers guidance. The work of the local authority's careers service is crucial in all this. The careers service plays a central role in YTS recruitment: eight in ten recruits enter via the careers service. The Government fully recognise its role and the extra burdens which high levels of youth unemployment have placed on its staff. We will be continuing to support directly over 1,000 posts in local authority services. The careers service in Rotherham will benefit by 11 posts — close to a third of its total complement.

Our range of employment and training measures continues beyond YTS to provide help to young people seeking to improve their job prospects.

The new workers scheme is there to assist job seekers under 21 by providing financial assistance to employers who engage young people at rates of pay which reflect their relative inexperience. In the Rotherham-Sheffield area, 765 people were benefiting at the end of March.

The community programme also provides participants with improved employment prospects, at the same time yielding direct and tangible benefits to the community. Places in the Rother Valley are organised in part by the Sheffield and district area office and in part by the Derby area office of the Manpower Services Commission. The Rotherham and district share of provision in the Sheffield area totals some 3,370 places; 3,029 places were filled at the end of April this year. Some 65 per cent. of entrants are under 25.

For those young people who suffer lengthier unemployment, measures are in place to provide them with motivation and skills to compete effectively for jobs as the economy grows. Earlier this year we announced that we were stepping up the restart programme to include people unemployed over six months and to provide further interviews at six-monthly intervals. We also announced an extension of the new job training scheme with the aim of giving nearly a quarter of a million people a year a better chance to compete for the increasing number of job vacancies through quality training lasting an average of six months.

Under restart arrangements in the Rotherham-Sheffield area some 28,346 people had been interviewed and 89 per cent. of those had been made a positive offer; 1,924 had entered restart courses and 107 had been accepted for job start allowances.

Job clubs have been extremely successful in helping the unemployed. There are 16 job clubs in the Rotherham-Sheffield area. Some 368 people have been participants and 180 have gone into jobs, while a further 48 have gone into the community programme.

We are also actively encouraging enterprise and self-employment. Since 1979 the number of self-employed people in the United Kingdom has risen from 1·9 million to over 2·6 million—an increase of 37 per cent. About one in nine of the labour force is now self-employed.

The self-employed option is therefore one which needs to be held out to young people. Of course, only a few will be equipped and ready to start work on a self-employed basis, but it would be a denial of the enterprise in our young people not to alert them to the opportunities.

Through the enterprise allowance scheme and in many other ways we are ready to foster an enterprise culture. The EAS has been very successful. In the Rotherham-Sheffield area close to 4,000 people have entered the scheme since August 1983, and at the end of April this year 1,376 were currently benefiting from the allowance.

The director of Rotherham enterprise agency reports a high level of interest in business start-up among young unemployed people. He estimates that approaching 50 per cent. of all his clients fall into the 18 to 25 age group.

There is a small business club affiliated to the enterprise agency with a core membership of 40 with at least 20 members who are 25 or under. The agency also has three workshops in different parts of the borough offering small starter units to small business. At each location approximately 40 per cent. of the tenants are young business people in this same age group. The view of the director is that more young people would seriously consider self-employment as an option if similar work space was more readily available.

The South Yorkshire regional co-ordinator of the newly formed Prince's Youth Business Trust — the PYBT—shares this view about the level of interest in business among young people. During the first three months of operation eight out of a total of 85 bursary applications received from young people have had Rotherham postal addresses.

It is not, of course, much use having a full range of employment, training and enterprise measures if they are not properly marketed so that those who are eligible for and in need of help are fully aware of what is available. Through our "Action for Jobs" campaign, therefore, we have made every effort to bring the schemes to the notice of those who might benefit by participating or by providing opportunities. The campaign has been extremely successful: over 5 million people have picked up copies of the booklet "Action for Jobs", which gives an easy-to-read guide to over 30 programmes available to help people to get work. This is an excellent programme.

Assistance to economic development in the Rother Valley is not, of course, a matter solely for my Department, and considerable help is being given from elsewhere. Since 1979, under regional selective assistance arrangements, some £8,379,000 has been made available to Rotherham and a further £12,780,000 has been provided to the Rotherham development area since 1984. Rotherham enterprise zone, which opened in 1983, has successfully attracted 74 firms employing about 2,000 people.

Traditional industries have, I agree, been contracting, but other sources of employment are available. I have already referred to jobs created in the enterprise zone. Other jobs are being created. A multi-million-pound development at Park Gate, Rotherham, is under way and scheduled to create several thousand job opportunities in the near future. A new store in Dinnington for Leo's Supermarkets will shortly provide 300 jobs.

Now that there are five jobs in services for every two in manufacturing it is especially encouraging to see the creation of new opportunities in the service sector in the hon. Member's constituency. It is also encouraging to report that the number of vacancies notified in the year ending March 1987 to Rother Valley jobcentres was some 17 per cent. up on the previous year and that a comparison on the same basis shows placings up 14 per cent. The stock of unfilled vacancies was up to 364, as against 217 a year earlier, which is a 68 per cent. increase.

[Mr. John Lee]

In a short debate such as this it is difficult to describe fully all that is being done to help young people in the Rother Valley. I hope, however, that the hon. Gentleman is clear that this Government are as concerned as he is to ensure worthwhile opportunities for young people in Rother Valley.

I have described what our particular measures are doing and will continue to do to help. Young people now have opportunities for training, way beyond those of earlier generations. These, together with the progress that we are making in creating a climate for new jobs, in economic growth and in defeating inflation, provide their best guarantee of better job prospects.

Green Belt

8.57 pm

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): I wish at once to express my appreciation to my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government for coming in to reply to this debate. I know that, as this Adjournment debate deals with the green belt and its importance to Hertfordshire, my hon. Friend will be most sympathetic, because in his constituency a piece of green land would be defended with the same vehemence and enthusiasm as the Alamo has been defended against marauding Mexicans. I like to think that my hon. Friend will give a sympathetic response to the requests that I shall be putting forward concerning the green belt of Hertfordshire.

This is, of course, in some ways a rerun of the debate in December 1985, when my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, the Member for Surbiton (Mr. Tracey) replied. At that time I had in the Chamber with me my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy), and I am very glad to see here my hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells), who I know is another champion of the green belt. I have to point out to the Minister that only a couple of months ago there was another Adjournment debate in the House on the green belt in Hertfordshire. That was initiated by my hon. Friend the Member for St. Albans (Mr. Lilley) and supported by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, West (Mr. Jones).

I want to make it absolutely clear and to emphasise that in Hertfordshire every single Member of Parliament is desperately concerned about, and supportive of, the green belt and the need for it to be maintained. When I last spoke on this subject I touched on the county structure plan and made various remarks such as that, of the 1,072 individual responses received in connection with the structure plan, only 50 indicated a desire for development taking place. All the rest wanted Hertfordshire to remain the pleasant green county that it is at present. I must confess that there is concern that the county structure plan currently before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will open the doors for further development, and a further covering of concrete for the county of Hertfordshire.

In the past, the Government have been most supportive. When the green belt has been under attack and appeals have been lodged, they have supported each of the local authorities that have, one by one, defended it against the proposals. My own area of south-west Hertfordshire is now under attack. The M25, a very busy motorway, runs through the middle of it. To the north-east, we have the town of Watford, a growing vigorous area. One or two industrial centres have been set up, notably in Croxley park. That has brought much industrial activity into the area. We also have a train service which, despite the criticisms that are made of London Regional Transport and British Rail, is very efficient, and transports literally tens of thousands of commuters down to the City every day. It is a very popular area. However, with that popularity comes pressure.

Just to the north of my area is the "golden triangle", which is currently subject to a proposal for development which, again, will cover it in concrete. While it will be several months before the planning appeal is heard in February 1988, I should nevertheless like to register with my hon. Friend the Minister the concern felt throughout the county that that stretch of land between St. Albans and Watford may be allowed to fall into the hands of the developers.

The original circular on the green belt made the position very clear. It said that it was there to check the growth of a large built-up area. From my point of view, that is very important. Several towns and villages in my area are separated from each other only by a thin strip of green land. If that thin strip were allowed to be "logically" developed, we should find that the growing tide of concrete and asphalt coming up from London would flow on remorselessly, and we should no longer know where Hertfordshire began and London ended.

The other purpose mentioned in the original circular was to preserve the special character of a town. I feel that a village in my constituency, the village of Bovingdon, is under attack. It is a pleasant village with a small infrastructure, which certainly cannot accommodate additional properties. Yet the structure plan suggests that it should be the recipient of a settlement. I believe that "settlements" are merely a means of getting around the present barriers and protections provided by the green belt. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will bear in mind that, while "settlement" sounds all very well in theory — as though a pioneering experiment will be taking place — it merely means the destruction of a typical piece of Hertfordshire by the planners.

When I attended a meeting in the village hall just over a year ago, the room was packed, and everyone there was violently against the idea of Bovingdon being destroyed. I hope that that message is clear, and that it is received not only by my hon. Friend the Minister but by his Department. I know that it will be faithfully transmitted when the opportunity comes.

I am sure that the answer to our housing problems—and there are such problems—is not to expand London or to cover everything with concrete, but to concentrate on some of the problems of our inner cities, and to try to rebuild and modernise areas that have been allowed to go to rack and ruin. There is a natural temptation to turn away from the difficulties of inner-city areas, and to take the so-called softer, green target of Hertfordshire as the answer to our problems. However, I know from experience that merely releasing a few parcels of land will not bring down property prices in Hertfordshire. Although some people say that we should relax the planning regulations a little and be more flexible in our approach, the only way to bring about a sizeable or even a modest reduction in land prices — and therefore property prices — in Hertfordshire is to release vast tracts of land, literally flooding the market and, in doing so, destroying the environment.

Let me draw my remarks to a close by making an impassioned appeal to my hon. Friend the Minister to go to our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and tell him that the structure plan before him must be tailored to the needs of Hertfordshire, so that we may preserve our green belt and we do not destroy our villages. In that way, I am sure that we shall create an environment that we can hand on to our children and grandchildren, and of which we can be proud.

8.7 pm

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): I thank my hon. Friend the Minister for listening to the debate, and congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) on initiating it.

The green belt in the Hertford and Bishop's Stortford area is being considered by the Department of the Environment under the revised county structure plan procedure. I believe that, as my hon. Friend has said, the plan is now in the red box of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. It contains a recommendation, or agreement, that a green belt be put around the town of Bishop's Stortford.

I know that that has been refused by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment in the past, and considerable resistance has been shown to putting a green belt around every town and making it extend further and further north into the county of Hertfordshire. But Bishop's Stortford has suffered the deprivations of the agreement by the Department to permit the expansion of Stansted airport. Mercifully, it will take only 8 million passengers per annum in the initial phase; it will not be the very large airport that was initially envisaged. Within three months of the decision having been taken, applications had been made to build houses in the Bishop's Stortford area. If they had been accepted, they would have doubled the size of the town. Some of the major construction companies applied for permission to build 15,000 houses in Bishop'S Stortford. They have an organisation that is constantly lobbying the Department, because they need permission to build houses to satisfy the housing demand. My right hon. Friend has to strike a balance between those pressures and the need to preserve the environment.

The county structure plan does exactly that. I urge my hon. Friend to approve the county structure plan before the election. If, however, he does not agree with the county's recommendations, I ask him to postpone his decision until after the election, when proper discussions can be held with him. His interrests are now focused on Brent, North, which I expect him to win for the Conservative party, rather than on the green belt around Bishop's Stortford.

The issue is extremely important in my constituency and in Hertfordshire generally. All that my hon. Friend has to do is to agree to the county's proposals. If he did so, we should congratulate him. I believe that he has the interests of Hertfordshire at heart because he listened to Hertfordshire's pleas when it was being murdered last October by the proposed rate support grant settlement. He took our representations seriously, saw the injustice of the proposals and modified them. He did not remove entirely the penalties on Hertfordshire, but he reduced from £16 million to £10 million the amount of money that had been taken away from Hertfordshire. That represented a sensible balance with which we could live.

The county structure plan provides a sensible balance. We are against wholesale development in Hertfordshire, but the electorate in my constituency has expanded in the last five years from 67,000 to 76,000. My constituents do not therefore adopt a curmudgeonly attitude to development. Nevertheless, the constituency needs the instruments with which to control development sensibly and to pay proper regard to the environment.

[Mr. Bowen Wells]

The county structure plan provides for a certain amount of development in designated areas and it reflects the development that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment asked us to accommodate within Hertfordshire. However, development must be controlled; we must ensure that environmental issues are looked after. I ask my hon. Friend to take the county structure plan out of the Box of his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and tell him that all he has to do is to sign it and issue it. I hope that he will do that in the next 24 hours.

8.14 pm

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): The debate is taking place at only two hours' notice, and I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) on taking this opportunity to raise the green belt issue, which is so important to our constituents. Concern about the green belt is felt not only in Hertfordshire but also in west and south-west London. My constituents in Twickenham, Teddington, the Hamptons and Whitton greatly cherish the green belt that successive Governments have upheld, but none more so than this Government, who, since 1979, have doubled the quantity of green belt in the United Kingdom, and even added to it around London. The green belt acreage now equals that of the Principality of Wales.

There is particular concern in my constituency about land that belongs to the Thames water authority. It lies to the west of Hampton village and contains two disused reservoirs. It borders Hanworth, in the constituency of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston (Mr. Ground) and also Kempton and Sunbury in the constituency of my right hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne (Sir H. Atkins). On several occasions, all of us have expressed concern to Ministers in the Department of the Environment.

Never in all my experience have I met as much strength of feeling about an environmental issue as I have met about this one. There have been 750 letters of objection to the proposed theme park on the site. I chaired two public meetings, one in July and one in September 1986, each of which was attended by between 500 and 600 people. At the end of July 1986 I presented a petition to the House that contained 2,200 signatures. An Adjournment debate was also held on this question on 14 November 1986. The concern continues. This development would create an immense increase in traffic, pollution of the atmosphere and, above all, loss of open land that de facto, though not officially, is green belt land.

The London borough of Hounslow, where most of the land is situated, intends to declare in its west area plan that this is green belt land. That plan was the subject of a public inquiry in February. I gave evidence to it and supported, as a Conservative Member of Parliament, the Labour-controlled local authority of Hounslow. The area is used by those who live on all sides of it for walking and sport and for the enjoyment of the grass, trees and wildlife. Once again I support the proposal that it should become green belt land.

When the Government consider the inspector's report on the west area plan of the London borough of Hounslow, I hope that they will declare that it is to be a green belt area. I cannot ask my hon. Friend the Minister to make a decision now. I am perfectly well aware that he is unable to do so until he has studied the inspector's report. However, I ask him merely to assure me that he has taken note of my points and that they will not be overlooked when the inspector's report is considered. I hope that he will declare that this is a green belt area, as that should pave the way for the refusal of the monstrous application on which a public inquiry is to be held next October.

8.18 pm

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley (Surrey, South-West): I endorse all that has been said about the importance of the green belt. I represent a constituency in south-west London where there is enormous pressure for the development of available land. My constituency has the fourth lowest level of unemployment in the country, with the result that there is great pressure for housing and other forms of development. Inevitably, planning decisions require the judgment of Solomon.

We greatly welcome the presence of the green belt, but we are deeply concerned about those areas that lie just outside the designated green belt. My constituents are very concerned about the fact that decisions have been overturned on appeal against the recommendations of the local planning committee. According to the recent district council results, the Conservatives have been returned in the same numbers as previously. The borough council has a solid Conservative majority, which demonstrates the confidence of local people that decisions on sensitive matters are well taken.

I know that the people of Surrey, South-West would also want me to convey to my hon. Friend the Minister the fact that they warmly welcome the initiatives that are being taken to encourage inner-city developments. Inevitably, where green field sites are available — especially in attractive areas — they will be the developers' first choice. However, it is welcome news that 45 per cent. of new development last year took place on re-used land. That is extremely encouraging. Those of us who have spent time in inner-city areas will know how important it is to revive them and to encourage people to develop sites there rather than eroding the vital green lungs around London.

In a previous Adjournment debate I raised the matter of Stockstone quarry, and I would ask my hon. Friend the Minister to consider the difficulties there seriously. What is happening is an abuse of natural justice and a misuse of our planning controls. On the basis of a 1952 planning consent, attempts have been made to use the quarry as the site for dumping massive amounts of waste from the London area. The contractors, A and J Bull, are now appealing against the conditions set out by the county council. I have written to my hon. Friend asking him to consider this matter, because it involves grave questions of principle and precedent for other green belt areas.

Like my hon. Friends, I welcome the extension of green belt land. As Conservatives, we are particularly concerned with the conservation of our environment. In this, the year of the environment, there is a strong feeling among my constituents that the green belt plays a vital part in our quality of life. I appreciate this opportunity to join my hon. Friends and to represent the views of my constituents.

8.21 pm

The Minister for Local Government (Dr. Rhodes Boyson): I am delighted to have the opportunity to reply to the debate. I think that all the minor details will be better looked at at leisure because of the importance of the issues.

I am delighted to welcome my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg), in whose constituency I have been privileged to speak. I must not refer to his family as being in the Gallery, but I believe that somewhere they are listening to the debate. Having talked to my hon. Friend many times, I know of his intense interest in green belt policy. He has often talked about the beauties of the Bury district and the revival, from time to time, of its football team. We have talked, too, about the beauty of the Rossendale valley, from which I come. Part of that valley, which is now a green belt area, was destroyed by the industrial revolution, but attempts are now being made to revive it. I know of my hon. Friend's wisdom on this matter and have often talked to him about the green belt in his constituency, in my constituency and in the constituencies of other hon. Members.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) on introducing the subject of green belt policy. As we have found this evening, there is continuing concern about pressures for the development and the future of the green belt. As we are heading for a general election, I welcome the opportunity to set out clearly the Government's policy and position on the green belt.

Green belt policy in England has been one of the most successful and popular of our planning policies. Unlike some others, it has not been affected by changes of fashion or even by fluctuations in economic and social forces. The pressures for development around our cities have increased steadily since the war and made it all the more important to preserve a belt of open countryside around them, and by resisting development in the green belts we shall be helping to redirect investment back into the inner cities, where it is most needed.

I am grateful for the strong support of my hon. Friends for the way in which this Government have protected our green belts. It is worth reminding the House that the area of approved green belts referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) in his impressive speech has more than doubled since 1979. I am sure that you would agree with me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you were allowed to speak, that that is an astounding success of the Government which should be known by everyone the length and breadth of the country. On recent measurements, the green belt now covers 4·5 million acres—an area almost equivalent to the size of Wales. Approved green belts now cover something like 14 per cent. of England.

I also remind the House of the answer which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) on 2 April this year, which will be known to many hon. Members here tonight. That reply showed that the area of approved green belts has increased from about 1·8 million acres in 1979 to 4·5 million acres. It provided details for each of the 15 green belts in England.

For example, London's approved green belt has increased in size from approximately 750,000 acres to 1·2 million acres. That for the west midlands area has also increased. I have no doubt that our green belt policy was instrumental in the revival of Toryism that we saw there last week. The people of the west midlands saw that we wanted not only to revive industry but that we wanted people to look out from their houses and towns on the green belts surrounding them. The good and prosperous life is part of our party's philosophy. The same is happening in towns such as Nottingham, Derby and Stoke-on-Trent.

Our planning system is based upon the principle that each case must be considered on its merits. This applies in green belts as elsewhere but inside a green belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. The policy on controlling development in the green belt, which was first set out in its present form in 1955, is that approval should not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use of exising buildings other than for a very limited range of purposes. Those are agriculture and forestry, sport, cemeteries, institutions standing in extensive grounds and other uses appropriate to such areas.

I shall deal with the specific matters raised by my hon. Friends. I again thank my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West for raising the matter. I think that I first met my hon. Friend in Workington in 1979. I spoke on the first day of the election campaign. My hon. Friend fought a hard fight in that constituency. The tide was heavily against him there, and we were all delighted when, after losing that seat, he stood for and won Hertfordshire, South-West. We are delighted with all that he is doing for the green belt in that area, and I assure him that I shall put his message across to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and come back to him on the details.

This is almost a naval debate. We have two Royal Navy ties present. My hon. Friends the Members for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells), and for Twickenham are both Royal Navy. Had I known, as chairman of the British Legion in north-west London, I too would have worn my naval tie. The only thing is that it has no green in it, and would therefore not have been as fitting as it might be to a debate on green belt policy.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I join my colleagues, in that I represent the Royal Naval School at Haselmere.

Dr. Boyson: That just shows the calibre of hon. Members who are linked with the Royal Navy. It is astonishing that, of the small number of hon. Members present, there is such great representation of the Royal Navy. The green waves and the green belt go together. We have stopped building for the open seas, apart from oil rigs which have been useful to this country, but we are building in our preservation of the green belts.

Mr. Jessel: Is my hon. Friend aware that my constituency includes a greater length of the bank of the River Thames than is within the entire area of Greater London?

Dr. Boyson: I must confess that I was not aware of that, but I shall be aware of it from now on. I shall ensure that that fact becomes known to one and all, particularly all.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford was a schoolmaster—we share an interest in that—and for a time was the director of the Aberdovey Outward Bound school. Outward Bound courses make the right use of the green belt, bringing up children with a knowledge of it. I am grateful for the tributes that my hon. Friend paid to me and to others—if I may say so in this frank debate, they were justified—for the help that we

[Dr. Boyson]

gave with the rate support grant. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend's popularity in his constituency. The fact that 9,000 people have hurried into that constituency in a few years is a walking tribute—or should I say running tribute, after the marathon at the weekend—to my hon. Friend.

My hon. Friend asked some questions about the green belt. I shall ensure that Ministers in the Department of the Environment, which I am privileged to serve, are aware of everything that he said. Undoubtedly, they will get in touch with those responsible in his area about the green belt proposals.

My hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham, who is also from the Royal Navy, is noted for music and, occasionally, skiing, at which he is sometimes successful, although he has fallen down, but that happens to all of us. The fact that he carries on is a tribute to his standing in all ways. For a long time, my hon. Friend has been one of Britain's greatest exponents of green belts. His constituents and those of all my hon. Friends should be grateful for their work. I trust that they are worthy of the hon. Members who represent them and defend their interests.

I was delighted to hear of the good borough results last week in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley). Undoubtedly, they were a tribute to her efforts and defence of the green belt in that area.

It is impressive at this stage of this Parliament, when many of us would like to get away to our constituencies, that, instead, we are considering the much more important issue of the preservation of the green belt. The difference between the Government and the Opposition is shown by the number of Conservative Back Benchers who wished to put across messages and who have thought about this matter — although some did not speak — and by the empty Opposition green Benches. If people have to decide at an early election, as I am told they will, how they should vote, they need only look from the Strangers Gallery—I must not look to see how many people are here or involve them in the debate — at the crowded Conservative Benches and the empty Opposition Benches. They will know that the Conservative party is concerned above all to preserve Britain's standards in every way, including its geography, green belt, prosperity and moral standards.

There is no doubt that if the people note that, the Conservative party's triumph in the general election will surpass even the great triumph of the 1983 election. It will be something of the past compared with the great future. There is no doubt that, because people know that Conservative Members stand for the green belt, they will flock to the polls to support them. We look forward to that day in four weeks' time when we see the Conservative green Benches in the House populated even more than the Opposition green Benches.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-six minutes to Nine o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 13 May 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Speaker: I have a short statement to make. The order of the House of 13 November last provided for a ballot to be held today for private Members' motions to be moved on 5 June. Clearly, in the changed circumstances there is no point in having a ballot for that day I have therefore given directions that it should not be held. I understand that this is acceptable to the House.

PRIVATE BUSINESS

CITY OF LONDON (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL

Ordered,

That in the case of the City of London (Various Powers) Bill, Standing Order 208 (Notice of consideration of Lords Amendments) be suspended and that the Lords Amendments be now considered.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Lords amendments agreed to.

CLOSURE OF DEBATE
(STANDING ORDER No. 35)

Return ordered,

respecting applications of Standing Order No. 35 (Closure of debate) during Session 1986-87, (1) in the House and in Committee of the whole House under the following heads:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Date when Closure claimed, and by whom	Question before House or Committee when claimed	Whether in House or Committee	Whether assent given to Motion or withheld by the Chair	Assent withheld because, in the opinion of the Chair, a decision would shortly be arrived at without that Motion	Result of Motion and, if a Division, Numbers for and against

and (2) in the Standing Committees under the following heads:—

1	2	3	4	5
Date when Closure claimed, and by whom	Question before Committee when claimed	Whether assent given to Motion or withheld by the Chair	Assent withheld because, in the opinion of the Chair, a decision would shortly be arrived at without that Motion	Result of Motion and, if a Division, Numbers for and against.

—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Return ordered,

Of the number of Instruments considered in Session 1986-87 by the Joint Committee and the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments respectively pursuant to their orders of reference, showing in each case the numbers of Instruments subject to the different forms of parliamentary procedure and of those within the Committees' orders of reference for which no parliamentary procedure is prescribed by statute, and the numbers drawn to the special attention of the House or of both Houses distinguishing the ground in the Committees' orders of reference upon which such attention was invited; and the numbers of Instruments considered by a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c., and by the House respectively, in Session 1986-87, showing the number where the Question on the proceedings relating thereto was put forthwith under Standing Order No. 101(5).—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

PRIVATE BILLS AND PRIVATE BUSINESS

Return ordered,

of the number of Private Bills, Hybrid Bills and Bills for confirming Provisional Orders introduced into this House, and brought from the House of Lords, and of Acts passed in Session 1986-87;

Of all Private Bills, Hybrid Bills and Bills for confirming Provisional Orders which in Session 1986-87 were reported on by Committees on Opposed Bills or by Committees nominated wholly by the House or partly by the House and partly by the Committee of Selection, together with the names of the selected Members who served on each Committee; the first and also the last day of the sitting of each Committee; the number of days on which each Committee sat; the number of days on which each selected Member served; the number of days occupied by each Bill in Committee; the Bills of which the Preambles were reported to have been proved; the Bills of which the Preambles were reported to have been not proved; and in the case of Bills for confirming Provisional Orders, whether the Provisional Order ought or ought not to be confirmed;

Of all Private Bills and Bills for confirming Provisional Orders which in Session 1986-87 were referred by the Committee of Selection to the Committee on Unopposed Bills, together with the names of the Members who served on the Committee; the number of days on which the Committee sat; and the number of days on which each Member attended;

And of the number of Private Bills, Hybrid Bills and Bills for confirming Provisional Orders withdrawn or not proceeded with by the parties, those Bills being specified which were referred to Committees and dropped during the sittings of the Committee.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

PUBLIC BILLS

Return ordered,

of the number of Public Bills distinguishing Government from other Bills, introduced into this House, or brought from the House of Lords, during Session 1986-87, showing:

(1) the number which received the Royal Assent, and

(2) the number which did not receive the Royal Assent, indicating those which were introduced into but not passed by this House, those passed by this House but not by the House of Lords, those passed by the House of Lords but not by this House, those passed by both Houses but Amendments not agreed to; and distinguishing the stages at which such Bills were dropped, postponed or rejected in either House of Parliament, or the stages which such Bills reached by the time of Dissolution.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

SELECT COMMITTEES

Return ordered,

for Session 1986-87, of statistics relating to the membership, work costs and staff of Select Committees with so much of the same information as is relevant to the Chairmen's Panel and the Court of Referees.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Return ordered,

of the days on which the House sat in Session 1986-87, stating for each day the day of the month and day of the week, the hour of the meeting, and the hour of the adjournment; and the total number of hours occupied in the sittings of the House, and the average time; and showing the number of hours on which the House sat each day, and the number of hours after the time appointed for the interruption of business. — *[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

SPECIAL PROCEDURE ORDERS

Return ordered,

of the number of Special Procedure Orders presented in Session 1986-87; the number withdrawn; the number annulled; the number against which Petitions or copies of Petitions were deposited; the number of Petitions of General Objection and for Amendment respectively considered by the Chairmen; the number of such Petitions certified by the Chairmen as proper to be received, and the number certified by them as being Petitions of General Objection and for Amendment respectively; the number referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses; the number reported with Amendments by a Joint Committee, and the number in relation to which a Joint Committee reported that the Order be not approved and be amended respectively; and the number of Bills introduced for the confirmation of Special Procedure Orders;

Of Special Procedure Orders which, in Session 1986-87, were referred to a Joint Committee, together with the names of the Commons Members who served on each Committee; the number of days on which each Committee sat; and the number of days on which each such Member attended.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

STANDING COMMITTEES

Return ordered,

for Session 1986-87, of (1) the total number and the names of all Members (including and distinguishing Chairmen) who have been appointed to serve on one or more of the Standing Committees showing, with regard to each of such Members, the number of sittings to which he was summoned and at which he was present; (2) the number of Bills, Estimates, Matters and other items referred to Standing Committees pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c) or Standing Order No. 102 (Standing Committees on European Community Documents) considered by all and by each of the Standing Committees, the number of sittings of each Committee and the titles of all Bills, Estimates, Matters and other items as above considered by a Committee, distinguishing where a Bill was a Government Bill or was brought from the House of Lords, and showing in the case of each Bill, Estimate, Matter and other item, the particular Committee by which it was considered, the number of sittings at which it was considered and the number of Members present at each of those sittings. — *[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Oral Answers to Questions

SCOTLAND

Labour Statistics

1. **Mr. McKelvey** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the seasonally adjusted unemployment figures for Scotland for the last available date and in May 1979, compiled on a similar basis.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): On a comparable basis, seasonally adjusted unemployment in Scotland was 150,400 in May 1979 and 344,600 in March 1987.

Mr. McKelvey: Is it not astonishing that the Secretary of State for Scotland, can stand at that Dispatch Box without hanging his head in shame when announcing these horrendous figures? I suspect that he will not need a crystal ball to translate those figures into terms of human misery, despondency and despair that the Government have spread throughout Scotland. I say to him, on behalf of the unemployed of Scotland, that he has one opportunity for atonement, and that is to resign here and now.

Mr. Rifkind: Before I do, may I welcome the hon. Gentleman on his return to the House? We are all pleased to see him after his recent illness.

I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's strength of feeling on this subject, but he should be aware of the substantial progress that the Scottish economy has been making, particularly over the last few months. I remind the House that the Scottish Business Survey, which was published by the Fraser of Allander Institute a few weeks ago, said:

> "The short-term prospects for the Scottish economy have improved markedly during the opening months of 1987 with business optimism continuing to rise and the prospects of some growth in employment. Firms in all sectors expect both sales and new orders to grow over the next few months with manufacturing and construction being particularly buoyant."

Mr. Hirst: Does my right hon. and learned Friend find it objectionable that the Opposition should speak in the way that they do, when their policies on nuclear power and weapons would, at a stroke, destroy scores of thousands of jobs in Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is correct. The South of Scotland Electricity Board has estimated that electricity tariffs would have to increase by 20 to 30 per cent. as a consequence of the abandonment of nuclear power. Apart from anything else, that would have meant that the Finnish pulp mill, which is coming to Irvine, would not have contemplated a Scottish location, and many of the tens of thousands of jobs around Scotland—Caithness, in particular—would have been severely affected, if not entirely lost.

Mr. Wilson: Is not the real indictment of the Secretary of State that after eight years he can rejoice in the unemployment figures that we have heard? He is so complacent about the situation that he relies solely on grasping the straws of short-term prospects. When will he do something about the Scottish economy, because under his care and that of his predecessor it has rotted away?

Mr. Rifkind: Far from being complacent, I am delighted that, over the past eight weeks, unemployment in Scotland has fallen by more than 16,000. I believe that the prospects for the Scottish economy are better than they have been for years. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the increased competitiveness of the Scottish economy, the increased productivity of those who work within that economy, and the far healthier state of the whole spectrum of Scottish business have enabled such improvements to take place.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Does my right hon. and learned Friend recall reading an article, in the *Glasgow Herald* in 1978, written by the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) predicting that unemployment would be well over 3 million in the next five years and pointing out that that would be due to the large numbers of new young people coming on to the labour market? Surely the hon. Gentleman was right. Is it not wrong for the Opposition to indulge in such double-standard electioneering and to seek to repudiate the figures that members of the Opposition predicted when they were in government?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is correct. The hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) made that prediction and emphasised that that increase would take place irrespective of which party was in government. However, thanks to improvements in productivity, competitiveness and the fall in inflation that has taken place since the Government came to power, not only is the standard of living of the Scottish people higher than ever before, but we have the prospect of a continuing fall in unemployment in Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lambie: Does the Secretary of State realise that unemployment in the Irvine travel-to-work area is now nearly 12,000, which is the equivalent of 25 per cent.? Is the Secretary of State aware that during the past six weeks I have twice raised the question of the threatened closure of McKinnon of Scotland knitwear factory in Irvine? The right hon. and learned Gentleman and his hon. Friends promised me their full support, but I have now been informed that the Industry Department in Scotland has withdrawn its offer of financial help to one prospective buyer of that factory. Why?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman has been misinformed. Discussions are continuing, and we have made it clear that the prospect of financial help for anyone interested in taking over that particular plant remains available for discussion. The Scottish Office has withdrawn no offers of help from anyone in connection with this particular plant. The hon. Gentleman, who represents Irvine, knows perfectly well that the prospects for Irvine took a tremendous turn for the better with the decision by the Finnish pulp mill to locate in Irvine. The hon. Gentleman is aware that the Labour party's policy on nuclear power would doom any prospect of that pulp mill coming to his constituency.

Mr. Dewar: In view of the figures, is not this professional optimism from the Secretary of State beginning to sound a little like cant? Is it not shameful that, after eight years of Conservative success, of which we hear so much, there are 363,000 Scots drawing unemployment benefit? According to the Library statisticians and working on a comparable basis, that is about 130 per cent. more than the figure that the Prime Minister inherited in 1979. Does the Secretary of State accept that unemployment must be a key issue in the coming weeks? Whatever the hopes of Scottish Ministers, many people in Scotland cannot forget the scarring misery of the dole queues and, I am afraid, the contribution that has been made to that crisis by the Government's thrawn indifference to what is happening in our communities.

Mr. Rifkind: First, the hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that unemployment doubled under the previous Labour Government, and I do not recall his drawing comparable conclusions at that time. Secondly, the hon. Gentleman knows well that the competitiveness and productivity of Scottish industry have never been higher. Thirdly, the hon. Gentleman knows that the Government have not only given substantial support to the Scottish Development Agency and Locate in Scotland, but have transformed those bodies into internationally recognised agencies, which are the best of their kind anywhere in Western Europe. In addition, the hon. Gentleman knows that the Labour party's proposals for an assembly with tax-raising powers have already been condemned by Scottish industry as likely to do enormous damage to industry and to the prospects for employment in Scotland.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that there are a number of questions on unemployment on the Order Paper. I ask for brief questions, which may lead to brief answers.

Guinness plc

2. **Mr. Craigen** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what follow-up discussions he has had with Guinness plc since the statement by the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) to the Scottish Grand Committee on 17 July 1986.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Ian Lang): My right hon. and learned Friend has met representatives of Guinness on three occasions since 17 July 1986. I have also been involved in meetings with the company. These discussions, which are continuing, have ranged over a variety of matters related to Guinness's activities in Scotland.

Mr. Craigen: Why did the Secretary of State for Scotland not answer the question? Is it because he realises that it was unfair of the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) to upstage the leader of the Liberal party last July during the Scottish Grand Committee debate on industry when he gave an assurance that the Secretary of State was on his charger as far as the Guinness company was concerned? We know that the Secretary of State is accident-prone in regard to horses. He falls off them. What more is the Secretary of State doing to get the company to locate in Scotland and bring the promised jobs?

Mr. Lang: We shall miss the hon. Gentleman's carefully modulated tones in the next Parliament. I wish him the best of luck in his future career

As my answer demonstrated, my right hon. and learned Friend and I keep in close touch with Guinness. We are watching the continuing developments involving the increasing location of its activities in Scotland.

Mr. Bill Walker: When my hon. Friend discusses matters with Guinness, will he discuss broken pledges and pledges that may not as yet have been fulfilled? Will he consider any pledge that was given to the leader of the Liberal party who robustly came out in defence of the Guinness attempted takeover of Bell's, Scotland's best performing whisky company at the time, on the basis that Bell's was in need of Guinness's assistance? We now see what that assistance has produced. We should like to know exactly what the promises were.

Mr. Lang: I am sure that the leader of the Liberal party can speak for himself, once he has cleared the matter with the leader of the Social Democratic party.

My hon. Friend will be glad to know of Guinness's expanded activities in Perth. Britain's leading spirits organisation, covering the marketing and sales of all United Kingdom brands, will be located there and will create 50 new jobs.

Sir Alex Fletcher: Does my hon. Friend agree that Guinness is suffering from a marked shortage of genius and that it would not require much at all to fulfil the commitments that were made many times in Scotland last year to move its headquarters and jobs to Scotland? Will he tell the House what the members of the Guinness board are saying about those commitments?

Mr. Lang: I hope that the amount of genius on the Guinness board has increased now that the chairman and chief executive and also two leading non-executive directors are Scots. As my hon. Friend knows, the chairman's office is in Edinburgh. The chief executive of the group and the chief executive of the new united Distillers group also have offices in Edinburgh.

Mr. Douglas: Will the Minister give us some assurance in relation not only to the headquarters of Bell's and other aspects of the Guinness subsidiary being located in Scotland, but the manufacturing base? Some of us have misgivings. We were given assurances by the previous management of Guinness—assurances that can bear no weight. Some hon. Members who have bottling plants in their constituencies are extremely worried about such assurances. What approaches have been made by his right hon. and learned Friend to ensure that not only the headquarters but the productive capacity and throughput of Bell's subsidiary are located in Scotland?

Mr. Lang: We are certainly in touch with Guinness on a continuing basis. The closure of bottling plants is regrettable, but some rationalisation of that kind was almost inevitable, regardless of ownership. All distilling, blending and bottling in the group is now centralised in Scotland.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Setting aside the whiff of City scandals, will the Minister explain to the House, as the Secretary of State has declined to do so, what happened to the pledges made on behalf of the Secretary of State on 17 July by the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary? What happened to the pledges about jobs? What happened to the firm, documentary commitments? What happened to the plan for location in Scotland? Above all, will the Minister tell the right hon. and learned Gentleman that the people of Scotland are now somewhat discouraged with his ill-founded optimism which has been shown most recently and notably in regard to Caterpillar?

Mr. Lang: I have already told the House of a number of developments to the advantage of Scotland in connection with Guinness. I can also point to the Glenochil yeast plant being retained in preference to the

Bristol plant, thus saving 300 jobs; to the modernisation of the Johnny Walker bottling plant at Kilmarnock, where there are 800 jobs; and to the expansion of Gleneagles as an international leisure centre.

Mr. Allan Stewart: With regard to what the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mr. Craigen) said about me, will my hon. Friend confirm that I was simply putting on record the position on 17 July in the interests of the people of Scotland and of all Scottish Members of Parliament? Does my hon. Friend agree that, irrespective of other matters, the whole of Scotland is full of admiration for the way in which Sir Norman Macfarlane has acted as chairman of Guinness?

Mr. Lang: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, and I entirely agree with his latter remarks.

Mr. Speaker: I called the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) because he was mentioned, so I shall call one more Opposition Member.

Mr. Martin: Because of the amalgamation with DCL, Guinness now owns almost the whole of the Port Dundas area in my constituency. The White Horse bottling plant has been lying empty for well over a year now, and steps should be taken by the Government to find out what will happen to that plant.

Mr. Lang: I dare say the hon. Gentleman will already have taken up that matter with the owners. I am sure that he shares my satisfaction at the continuing success of the whisky industry. Exports in the last year for which we have figures exceeded £1 billion in value.

Village Halls

3. **Mr. Michael Forsyth** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received regarding capital grants for village halls in the Stirling constituency; and if he is satisfied with the operation of the relevant scheme in the central region.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. John MacKay): My hon. Friend has made representations on behalf of the communities involved in the grant scheme for village halls since Central regional council declined to support this programme. However, Stirling district council is prepared to sponsor projects, and I will be providing half the eligible costs to enable four to proceed.

Mr. Forsyth: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is disgraceful that Central region should have sought to prevent halls in my constituency benefiting from grants from the Scottish Office to the extent of 50 per cent.? What is the position now in respect of the halls in Gartmore, Killin, Lochearnhead and Brig o'Turk?

Mr. MacKay: I share my hon. Friend's concern that Central regional council did not agree to take part in what is considered in most parts of Scotland—including my own constituency—to be a worthwhile scheme. I can confirm that the four halls that he has mentioned will be going ahead, and that I shall be contributing £95,000 of central Government money to the project.

Mr. Kirkwood: Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that the people who run the village halls in Stirling, to which reference has been made, would be in a better position to organise their enterprises if the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations was given some support by his Department for getting a full-time officer, so that the schemes for co-ordinating SED and capital grants and other running costs could be made available publicly?

Mr. MacKay: I would rather use the money to help the communities to build halls than create yet another centralised Scottish bureaucracy.

Mr. Home Robertson: Is it not sheer humbug for a Tory Member of Parliament who has spent his undistinguished career here attacking all forms of public subsidies to seek to distort the record of Labour local authorities in relation to the provision of subsidies to village halls in his constituency? Is the Minister aware that no fewer than 40 village halls throughout rural Stirlingshire have had the benefit of assistance under this and other schemes, thanks to initiatives taken by Stirling district council — a Labour-controlled authority — under the excellent leadership of Councillor Michael Connarty?

Mr. MacKay: I do not think that my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) requires a lecture from the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson), who has his own distinguished line in hyprocrisy—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not a parliamentary phrase. Please withdraw it.

Mr. MacKay: I quite happily withdraw the latter word. The hon. Gentleman has a most distinguished line in his own unique blend of intellect which he brings to the House. Those of us who have to listen to him in agricultural debates, in which he is a noted expert, being a major landowner in Scotland, are well aware of his brilliance.

Labour Statistics

4. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total number of unemployed people in Scotland in *(a)* May 1979 and *(b)* May 1987 or the latest available date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: There were 154,419 unemployed claimants in Scotland in May 1979 and 363,781 in March 1987. While unemployment still remains too high, it is encouraging to see the substantial reductions in the Scottish total in the last two months.

Mr. Canavan: If the Minister has the chance of addressing the Prime Minister's Nuremburg-type rally at Perth this coming weekend, will he take off his Goebbels mask and tell the people of Scotland the whole truth which is that, according to the independent unemployment unit, the real total of unemployed people in Scotland is well over the 400,000 mark? There are over 400,000 reasons why the people of Scotland will reject the Tory party. The Tory party in Scotland will be reduced to a discredited rump at the forthcoming general election. Perhaps even the people of Galloway and Edinburgh, Pentlands and Argyle and Edinburgh, South will return Labour Members of Parliament instead of the Thatcherite lackeys who misrepresent them at present.

Mr. Lang: The hon. Member has a wonderful sense of humour. For the moment, I shall content myself by welcomimg the fact that unemployment in his constituency has fallen by about 1 per cent. over the last two months, and that about 77 per cent. of the members of his local job club go out of the job club into employment.

Mr. Henderson: Is not the whole truth seen when one also looks at the figures of employment? Will my hon. Friend confirm that employment has been rising steadily in Scotland, together with manufacturing productivity, exports and industrial profitability?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. In particular, self-employment has been rising sharply as people realise the attraction of setting up their own businesses in the improved economic climate that we have established in Scotland.

Mr. MacKenzie: Does the Parliamentary Under-Secretary accept that many hon. Members, especially Opposition Members, and indeed many people throughout Scotland, will regard the figures that he has given as absolutely scandalous? Secondly, does he agree that he must look very much beyond even the figures that he has so starkly mentioned today? There are men over 40 who do not see any prospect of ever getting a job under this Administration, and many young people now in their early 20s have never had a decent job since they left school. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary and his colleagues, who are responsible for the administration of industry in Scotland, should think black burning shame of themselves that these young people should have no hope at all under this Government.

Mr. Lang: I can understand why the right hon. Gentleman, having had no familiarity in his party during its period in government with falling unemployment, may not recognise the good news that is now coming through in the Scottish economy. Unemployment is falling sharply among the long-term unemployed and among young unemployed. The economy is responding to the wide range of measures for training and increasing enterprise that we have generated in the last few years.

Sir Alex Fletcher: Will my hon. Friend tell the House the extent to which employment and self-employment have increased in Scotland since 1983?

Mr. Lang: Since 1983 self-employment has increased by 27 to 30 per cent. That is a very encouraging figure. In terms of employment generally, because of the expanded work force, undoubtedly there are many more people in employment than there have been for some considerable time.

Mr. Bruce: Does the Minister acknowledge that since the Conservative Government came to power in 1979 Scotland has lost no fewer than 180,000 jobs in manufacturing industry and that nothing in the Government's policy is replacing those? Will he further acknowledge that, instead of selectively taking the last two months, the realistic trend of the last six months shows that the rate of decrease in unemployment in Scotland is such that it will take 160 years to get the unemployment level back to the level that the Tories inherited?

Mr. Lang: That is one of the most idiotic questions that I have heard in this Chamber for some considerable time. The hon. Gentleman takes no account whatever of the expansion of the service industry, and of banking and the financial sector, all of which generate good, effective and profitable jobs. A more significant point about manufacturing industry is that output is almost at the level that it was at when there were 190,000 more jobs in manufacturing. That improved productivity is the strongest safeguard for future growth and employment in Scotland.

Mr. Buchan: Does the Minister agree that on no fewer than 19 occasions the Government have fiddled the figures, and that on each occasion that has, accidentally, Glory be, brought the figures down? Does the hon. Gentleman further agree with the Secretary of State for Employment, who said, "I lose no sleep over unemployment"? As Conservative Members are fond of quotations, does the Minister agree with the most recent quotation by the Secretary of State when he went to Renfrewshire, an area devastated by unemployment, where eight out of 10 young people in my constituency either have no job or are on short-term training, and said, "Every day is like Christmas."? If every day is like Christmas, when will the unemployed get some bloody presents from the Government?

Mr. Lang: The hon. Gentleman is wrong. There have been only six discernible changes—*[Interruption.]*—in the method of calculation of unemployment — *[Interruption.]* Two of the changes — the change to fortnightly registration and the inclusion of the severely disabled — have had the effect of increasing, not reducing, the unemployment count. If the hon. Gentleman wants to look for dramatic and substantial changes in the way in which the unemployment figures are calculated, he should look back at the previous Labour Administration, who removed adult students, which had an effect that could have been as high as 200,000 at some times in the year.

Primary Schools

6. **Mr. Steel** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to alter his policy relating to the merger of primary schools so as to have at least three teachers.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. and learned Friend has no such policy. Decisions on those matters are essentially for local authorities.

Mr. Steel: Is the Minister aware that he will always be warmly welcomed in the Borders with his fishing rod in the increased leisure time that he will have from 12 June onwards, but that his last visit to my constituency has been widely misconstrued? The speech that he made at the opening of Newlands school, amalgamated with two schools two miles on either side of it, has been widely interpreted as meaning the first amalgamation of rural schools in scattered areas. I trust that the hon. Gentleman will make it clear that that was not his intention.

Mr. MacKay: The right hon. Gentleman was present when I made my speech at that opening, and I think that he was as impressed as I was with the new school that was being built there. I would not embarrass him by asking him whether he was impressed by the speech, but I remind him of what I said in it. I said that there are some places, as in my constituency, where one-teacher schools are inevitable. That is our firm policy in the Scottish Office.

Mr. Henderson: Will my hon. Friend confirm that in helping such schools it is of great assistance that the pupil-teacher ratios are better than they have ever been before?

Will my hon. Friend further confirm that that also helps the unemployment problem because more young people are now leaving school with an educational qualification than ever happened under the Lib-Lab pact?

Mr. MacKay: My hon. Friend is quite right. The pupil-teacher ratios in primary and secondary schools in Scotland are at the best level that they have ever been. Indeed, we are seeing an increasing number of youngsters leaving school with qualifications.

Mr. Dewar: The Minister will understand that I did not have the advantage of listening to his speech, but I carefully read the press statement. In it, he makes it clear — presumably it is a highlight that he wished to emphasise by including it — that he thinks that schools with fewer than three teachers are educationally disadvantageous. There is a clear implication that he expects them to go whenever possible. I want to be clear that that is his position, particularly on 5 May the Secretary of State for Education and Science in England gave a writen answer in which he distanced himself deliberately from that position and made it clear that he thought that

"geography; the distances to be travelled to alternative schools in the event of closure; and the age of the children making these journeys." — [*Official Report*, 5 May 1987; Vol. 115, c. *311*.]

should be taken into account. Can the Minister do something to put a warmer face on the nasty accountancy approach that he seems to have been taking to those matters until now?

Mr. MacKay: Perhaps it is unfortunate that the hon. Gentleman was not present on that occasion to hear my speech and to see the school, but the position is as I stated to the leader of the Liberal party, the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel). Of course there are areas in which, inevitably, one-teacher schools will be the way in which local communities' educational needs have to be dealt with. It is clear that when there are any proposals for amalgamation from the regional councils, it is essential that the parents and other local interests are consulted and the decisions are taken along with the policy. For primary schools, where there is a distance of more than five miles between the closing and receiving schools, that case has to come to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and myself. We then look carefully into the situation, and that includes asking the local Member of Parliament for his comments.

Mr. Donald Stewart: As the Secretary of State for Education and Science has recommended a reprieve for all rural schools south of the border will the Minister issue a directive or recommendation to local authorities in Scotland to the effect that a similar position should obtain there?

Mr. MacKay: It is a pity that the right hon. Gentleman, who is the leader of the Scottish National party, does not realise that there is a difference between Scotland and England. The Department of Education and Science put out a circular and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has announced a change in that position. Our Department did not put out a circular. Our position is the one that I laid down clearly a few minutes ago, which is that it is up to the local authorities to look at the issue. In my view—I made this perfectly clear in my speech in the Borders — if local authorities are to change the school structure in the villages, they have to co-operate and take with them the parents in the villages.

Civil Nuclear Power

7. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the effect on electricity prices in Scotland of phasing out civil nuclear power.

Mr. Rifkind: The South of Scotland Electricity Board estimates that tariffs would have to rise by about 30 per cent. if civil nuclear power generation were to be phased out in Scotland.

Mr. Hirst: I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for his reply. Does he agree that if Labour and the alliance got their way and scrapped nuclear power the high energy using industries would leave Scotland altogether? In particular, will my right hon. and learned Friend reiterate that if Opposition policies to scrap nuclear power are implemented the British pulp mill at Irvine will never go into production?

Mr. Rifkind: I agree with my hon. Friend. The Liberal assembly voted to abandon nuclear power, and the Labour party also carried such a resolution. No doubt because of the damage that would be done to the Scottish economy by the Labour party's policy, the Scottish TUC refused to support the Labour party on this issue. The TUC has emphasised that it believes that Torness should be commissioned and that Hunterston should continue to be available. It has emphasised its belief that nuclear power must play a crucial part in meeting Scotland's energy requirements. The Scottish TUC has clearly rejected the views of the Labour party in Scotland on such an important issue.

Mr. Strang: Does the proposal put forward by the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning—that people living close to nuclear power stations should receive financial compensation—have the right hon. and learned Gentleman's support?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman can be assured that any policy with regard to those near nuclear power stations that may be enunciated by the Government will apply throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Corrie: If nuclear power were phased out in Scotland, what effect would it have on employment in the generating industry? What effect could it have on employment outside the generating industry because of increased costs?

Mr. Rifkind: The best estimate of those who would be directly involved is of some 10,000 jobs in Scotland associated with the nuclear industry. In recent weeks, we have had the decision on Sizewell by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, which has led, for example, to Weirs announcing 200 or 300 extra jobs, to Babcock confirming that it would now not need to announce additional redundancies and to other such improved opportunities. Clearly, phasing out would have a devastating effect in Caithness, where about 20 per cent. of all employment is associated with Dounreay, which might explain why one alliance Member is strongly in favour of nuclear power although his colleague the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) is strongly against it.

Mr. Foulkes: Does the Secretary of State accept that it does not help the economics of the SSEB to have the huge capital investment of Inverkip power station lying unused? Is he aware that Strathclyde region has suggested to the SSEB that it carry out a study into the feasibility of converting Inverkip to coal burning? Will the Secretary of State and the Government give every encouragement, both moral and financial, to the SSEB to carry out this important and valuable proposal by Strathclyde regional council?

Mr. Rifkind: The specific use of Inverkip is clearly a matter for the SSEB to determine in the light of its overall requirements. I was encouraged by the fact that when the SSEB made its announcement about Inverkip it said that it believed that those who would otherwise be employed at Inverkip could be re-employed elsewhere within the SSEB's activities. The future use of Inverkip must be a matter for the SSEB to determine.

Mr. Allan Stewart: Further to what my right hon. and learned Friend has said about Sizewell, is he aware that the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) has made it clear that the alliance policy is against the Sizewell decision, despite the importance of the jobs for Renfrewshire and Glasgow, and that the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins)—I make nothing of the point that he is not here today, as he has many duties, for example, at Oxford university — has not dissociated himself from that statement? Is not the right hon. Member for Hillhead a disgrace to Glasgow?

Mr. Rifkind: Not only the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) but all alliance candidates in Renfrewshire and elsewhere in the west of Scotland must accept, as the Labour party must accept, that companies such as Weirs, Babcocks and many others which are heavily dependent upon such orders would suffer severe redundancies if the policies of those parties were implemented.

Labour Statistics

8. **Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the seasonally adjusted unemployment figures for Scotland and the Dundee travel-to-work area for the last available date; and what were the figures in May 1979, compiled on a similar basis.

Mr. Lang: There were 150,400 unemployed claimants in Scotland on a seasonally adjusted basis in May 1979 and 344,600 in March 1987. Unemployment data on a seasonally adjusted basis are not available for smaller areas.

Mr. Ross: How does the Minister feel about the fact that since the Government came to power unemployment in Dundee has doubled? How does he line that up with the recent decision of the Secretary of State to claw back £500,000 in rates from the Dundee district council? How many jobs will that cost the local community, particularly as the Secretary of State for Employment has withdrawn 450 community places? How many jobs will be lost in Tayside by his right hon. and learned Friend's decision to claw back £2·8 million from the Tayside region?

Mr. Lang: If the hon. Gentleman would care to reflect on the number of jobs that have been lost by the high rates in Dundee, he might be nearer to the mark. Dundee has featured considerably in the Government's plans to help people with training, employment and enterprise measures. Many schemes have been pioneered successfully in Dundee and it now has five job clubs. The Scottish Development Agency has launched a major initiative in the area and the area also has an enterprise zone. The consequence of that is a continuing and substantial increase in enterprise in the Dundee area.

Mr. O'Neill: Would the Under-Secretary of State care to reflect on the fact that in the past 12 months the number of people out of work in Clackmannan has dropped by six? What would he say to those who are employed by McKinnons, who had their hopes dashed by the parsimony of the Scottish Office in backing the bid that was put in for that group some weeks ago? How can he square his crowing about the fall in unemployment figures with the prospect of 150 jobs going down the river because of the failure to back a bid which may have guaranteed 1,000 jobs in Scotland?

Mr. Lang: The hon. Gentleman can have absolutely no evidence for that claim, as my Department has been involved in making available assistance in the context of a takeover of that company. As to unemployment in Clackmannan, I have no doubt whatsoever that Clackmannan will share in the fall in unemployment, which is now so apparently widespread around Scotland.

Mr. Bill Walker: Is my right hon. Friend aware that in the Dundee travel-to-work area millions of pounds of public funds have been spent and an enterprise zone has been created since 1979? Does this not show that throwing public money at problems does not necessarily produce jobs? Secondly, does he agree that jobs are created by those who work and create wealth and that the additional rates imposed by the Tayside regional council will make it extremely difficult for the Tayside health board to raise the extra funds and will cost many jobs?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. During my last visit to Dundee I was most impressed by the way in which some of the old jute warehouses had been adapted to provide accommodation for new, small, start-up businesses. The businesses are creating many jobs and seem to have a high survival rate.

Sir Russell Johnston: Should the mad caprice of the electoral system produce another Conservative Government, would the Minister be able to make any projection of a decrease in unemployment over the next two years, or is he just wandering around in a fog with no idea of where he is going?

Mr. Lang: On the contrary, we have a firm idea of where we are going. In the next Parliament we shall continue with the policies that are now yielding such great successes, as a result of which such independent organisations as the Fraser of Allander Institute and the CBI are now producing their most optimistic estimates of the economic situation for a long time.

National Farmers Union

9. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chairman of the National Farmers Union of Scotland; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. and learned Friend and I attended the union's dinner on 12 March. I addressed the annual general meeting the following day and had a further detailed exchange with the leadership and members.

Mr. Bruce: The Under-Secretary will recall that a delegation of myself and colleagues met him on 8 April and urged him, amongst other things, to support the increase in the suckler cow premium. I welcome the fact that yesterday the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, in a written reply to me, confirmed that that will be done, in response to pressure and demand from the industry, and indeed, from myself and hon. Friends. Will the Minister now acknowledge that although that is helpful, it does not resolve the crisis in the beef industry, which is looking for a double figure devaluation of the green pound? Will he give an assurance that he is pressing for that?

Mr. MacKay: I do not want to depress the hon. Gentleman's delusions of grandeur, but I remind him that it was the Government, with Agriculture Ministers at the December Council, who persuaded the Community to raise the ceiling on the suckler cow premium, which has allowed us to increase the amount to be paid this year from £24·74 to £33·40. That will mean that some £3¼ million more will go into the Scottish beef industry. The industry will welcome that and will thank the Government for their efforts in getting that.

Sir Hector Monro: Does my hon. Friend agree that that increase of no less than 35 per cent. in the suckler cow subsidy is good news, but does he also agree that the Government's retention of the sheepmeat and beef regimes, lowering interest rates and the keeping down of inflation is also welcome news for Scottish farmers, who have been going through a difficult period as a result of the weather and for other reasons?

Mr. MacKay: Yes, my hon. Friend is quite right. One of the other important gains that we made at the December Council was to keep the beef variable premium scheme for the next two years instead of having to battle for it every year. My hon. Friend is also right about the need for a devaluation. We have made it clear that the 4 per cent. devaluation proposed by the European Commission is not enough. Our aim will be for a higher devaluation, certainly one higher than that for the French and Irish, who already have more MCAs than the United Kingdom.

Mr. Home Robertson: Does the Minister accept that the Government's record in rural Scotland is downright shameful? In particular, does he remember the description of the Government's position by the president of the National Farmers Union of Scotland as

> "A botched-up, incoherent and chaotic set of policy decisions"?

Now that we have almost unprecedent depression and uncertainty in the farming industry, and growing chaos in the CAP, is the Minister aware that the industry will be far better off when it returns to the practical partnership on which it has always been able to rely under Labour Governments?

Mr. MacKay: I am always interested in the view of the landowner from Berwick on these matters. I should like to be a fly on the wall when he explains to farmers around Britain that the Labour party will rate agricultural land and considerably increase the cost to farmers. We have a good record on farming. Of course, there are difficult times with surplus production, but anybody who thinks that there is an easy solution to that lives in cloud-cuckoo-land, which is probably where the hon. Gentleman does live.

Mr. Pollock: Does my hon. Friend agree that, above all, farmers seek confidence in their industry's future and reassurance about their prospects? Does he agree that he and his colleagues must be seen publicly to fight their corner on behalf of farming? Will he continue to give a commitment to fight vigorously to remove the distortion of the green pound and protect Scotland's vital livestock sector?

Mr. MacKay: I am well aware of the position of the beef sector and its importance to Scottish agriculture. Indeed, when I visited my hon. Friend's constituency earlier in the year and met his farmers they left me in no doubt about the importance of those matters and I left them in no doubt about the Government's commitment to the farmers and the rural economy of Scotland. That is shown clearly by the announcement that we have just made about the suckler cow premium and the reiteration that I have just made of the view of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on our aims in the current negotiations over the green pound.

Steel Industry

10. **Mr. James Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will next meet the chairman of the British Steel Corporation to discuss the tube manufacturing side of the steel industry in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: There are no plans for any meeting in the immediate future, but as indicated on previous occasions my right hon. and learned Friend hopes to continue to meet the chairman of the British Steel Corporation on a regular basis.

Mr. Hamilton: When the hon. Gentleman next meets the chairman of the British Steel Corporation, will he remind him of the widely reported statement that a French company is trying to form a consortium with Clydesdale steelworks in my constituency and that, if the consortium is formed, 600 jobs will go from Clydesdale steelworks? Bearing in mind all the other redundancies that have taken place in Lanarkshire, does he not feel that it is incumbent on him to impress upon the chairman that it is vital that the consortium be made aware that the 600 jobs are saved?

Mr. Lang: I wish the hon. Gentleman a long and happy retirement when he leaves the House.

The press reports to which the hon. Gentleman referred are speculation. The BSC will be vigorously seeking additional orders for the steel capacity in this country, both at home and abroad. Any proposal would have to come to the Government for approval, and no such proposal has been put to us.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND

Road Deaths

39. **Sir Russell Johnston** asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland what was the number of fatal accident inquiries concerning road deaths in the last year for which figures are available.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland (Mr. Peter Fraser): As far as can be ascertained, in 1986 there were 13 road traffic cases which resulted in fatal accident inquiries being instructed.

Sir Russell Johnston: Is the Solicitor-General aware that many people are puzzled about the small number of fatal accident inquiries that there are in proportion to the number of fatal accidents? I understand that in 1986 there were 600 fatal accidents. Can he advise the House what criteria are used by his Department to initiate inquiries, because in many cases great stress is caused to individuals who suffer the loss of friends and relations because of a lack of knowledge as to exactly what happened?

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: If there are criminal proceedings following a fatal accident on the roads, in most circumstances it would be wholly inappropriate, either before or after such a trial, to hold a fatal accident inquiry. In some circumstances, under the Act there is a mandatory requirement that a fatal accident inquiry be held. A discretionary inquiry is held where it is considered expedient in the public interest on the ground that the death was sudden, suspicious or unexplained, or occurred in circumstances such as to give rise to serious public concern. It is under the last head, where a discretion is exercised, that such inquiries are held.

Royal High School, Edinburgh

41. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland what is the number of people employed by the Crown Office at the old Royal High School building, Edinburgh.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: The total number of persons employed in the Crown Office is 104.

Mr. Canavan: Although I realise that the Solicitor-General may be busy in the next few weeks looking for another job for after the general election, may I ask him to try to find time to look for alternative premises for the more important people who are employed at the Crown Office headquarters? After the general election the building will be required for the Scottish Assembly, which the Labour Government will set up and which the majority of the people of Scotland want because they are absolutely fed up with being ruled by a quasi-colonial Tory junta which received no mandate from the people of Scotland in the last general election, and which will be kicked out by an even more resounding majority at the next general election.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: The only chance there is of significant movement is that of the hon. Gentleman from his seat, as the Labour party Front Bench will have to move below the Gangway to find somewhere to sit after the general election. I have indicated on previous occasions that the Crown Office will look for alternative premises some time in the future. There is plenty of work for the Crown Office to do and it is a perfectly satisfactory use of the building for the time being.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Will my hon. and learned Friend take steps, anticipating the high probability of his being returned and occupying his present position after the general election, to look at the possibility of his staff being employed elsewhere so that the Royal High School building can be sold because a Scottish Assembly will have no part in the prosperous, competitive Scotland that the next Conservative Government will seek to achieve?

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: Yes. As I have already said, there is another appropriate location in Edinburgh for the Crown Office. It is extremely unlikely that the existing building will ever be put to the use of a Scottish Assembly. The hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) should appreciate that while his party was in government it spent its time arguing strenuously about a Scottish Assembly but did absolutely nothing to reform the law in Scotland. Since 1979 we have introduced about 23 reports from the Scottish Law Commission. We have done a great deal more than the Labour Government ever did, with all their talking.

Project Zircon

42. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland if he is now in a position to say when he expects to receive *(a)* an interim and *(b)* a full report from the procurator fiscal on the progress of police inquiries in relation to Project Zircon.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: A number of reports have been received since 31 January.

Mr. Dalyell: Is it not 101 days since the special branch moved into Queen Margaret drive? Is it not 105 days since the *Glasgow Herald* and *The Scotsman* prominently displayed information about the likelihood of a police raid? Is it not 106 days since the Secretary of State for Scotland was first told what was happening? Is it not 107 days since Chief Inspector Ray Dowd of New Scotland Yard contacted Alan Protheroe of the BBC? Why have distinguished policemen in Strathclyde and the Metropolitan police failed to come up with anything?

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: I know that the answer I have to give to the hon. Gentleman will not fit in with the bizarre preoccupations that he has over this matter and the gratuitously offensive things that he has said repeatedly and without any foundation or basis of fact about my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. I would have thought that the last honourable thing that the hon. Gentleman might do before the end of this Parliament is withdraw those remarks.

Mr. Foulkes: Does the Solicitor-General for Scotland accept that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as the Department responsible for Project Zircon, would be the aggrieved party in any action taken in relation to that project? I am sure that the Solicitor-General for Scotland is aware of Professor Bradley's view that the aggrieved party has a particular role to play in the case of any prosecution. Therefore, can the hon. and learned Gentleman say what contact has been made with Ministers or officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to ascertain their views on the matter?

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: My interest and that of my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate is to ascertain, through the procurator fiscal, following an investigation, whether there have been any breaches of the Official Secrets Act or any other offences.

Mr. Dalyell: The Solicitor-General for Scotland is just stalling for time.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: If the hon. Gentleman will give me a moment, I might be able to give his hon. Friend a reply.

Mr. Dalyell: Just be a Law Officer.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: I know what Professor Bradley has said, and on previous occasions I have indicated that my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate and I disagree with what he said would be the appropriate steps to be taken with regard to contracting the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. However, more recently, as I have said, we are awaiting further reports, although some have been received. In that context, there is no further contact with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that one of the great difficulties in the Zircon project investigation was the fact that the BBC linked the various programmes in a way that made it impossible for the searches to be carried out without having to look for all the related aspects? That complicated the inquiry from the outset and it was necessary that the instructions given to the procurator fiscal made it clear that that complication existed.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: When my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary addressed this matter in a debate some weeks ago he made it clear that the matter relating to the "Secret Society" programmes was so interwoven that that action had to be taken. As far as I am aware, the BBC has never publicly dissented from that.

Mr. Buchan: Surely this is a most shocking situation. It is three months and more since the most devastating invasion that has ever occurred in Britain, in which the hon. and learned Gentleman's Office was closely involved. It had all the appearances of a conspiracy and charges have been made about the Secretary of State for Scotland. After three months, and on the eve of their own demise, the Government still cannot come forward with even an interim public statement. It is an absolute disgrace for the whole of Scotland.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: I am not sure whether there was any question in the hon. Gentleman's comments. However, while the matter is being investigated, and while reports are being received, I would have thought that the hon. Gentleman, who proclaims himself to be a protector of the interests and rights of the individual, would expect such reports to be carefully considered by Crown counsel before any action was taken. To make a statement about this matter in the interim could, in certain circumstances—and I am not saying that such circumstances will occur—be highly prejudicial to anyone wanting the right to a fair trial.

Mr. Dewar: The Solicitor-General may remember that when we last exchanged views on this matter at Question Time, he gave what I am sure was the inadvertent impression that all the material to allow the "Secret Society" series to be transmitted had been returned to the BBC. I understand that that is not true with regard to the Zircon programme. Will the Solicitor-General confirm that? Can he estimate when the material will be returned to the BBC, so that the BBC can proceed with showing that film?

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: Certainly, as I understand it, and I do not depart from this view, with regard to five of the six programmes, all the necessary material has been returned. There is what I believe is described as a principal transmission film of the Zircon affair programme which is still being held. Technicaly, I cannot say whether there is sufficient material in the hands of the BBC for that programme to be broadcast. However, I can confirm that the principal transmission film is still retained. In any event, I understood that it was the BBC's attitude that it would not broadcast that particular programme. I am not sure whether the hon. Member is aware of any change in the BBC's attitude.

State Security

3.31 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No, 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

> "the need for the Prime Minister to set up an inquiry into the role of the late Airey Neave, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in relation to attempts to destabilise the elected Government in the 1970s."

The matter is—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Dalyell.

Mr. Dalyell: The matter is definite in that the authors of "The Pencourt File" which, as the Prime Minister rightly said, sparked off the 1977 inquiry into the security services, have been reported as having been interrogated by the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) and the hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow), the late Airey Neave and the present Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. I refer to the article by Anthony Cheesewright which is in your possession, Mr. Speaker. That article is headed

> "Tebbit's joy at Wilson's plight."

The information has come to light since the Prime Minister turned down the call for an inquiry.

I have to persuade you, Mr. Spraker, that the matter is important, because it raises the issue of obligations of hon. Members of this House in condoning trouble made for the elected Head of Government of this country by the security services.—[Hon. Members: "Bad taste."] I hear it said that this is in bad taste. I will openly say that the late Airey Neave was a friend of mine—*[Interruption.]* It is important also because a beneficiary of so much of the late Airey Neave's activity is the present Prime Minister —[Hon. Members: "Disgraceful."] It is unbecoming for such a beneficiary to turn down an inquiry demanded by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Sir J. Callaghan).

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dalyell: The matter is urgent because the then hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), who seemed—and I put it politely—to acquiesce in the daily tricks of the 1970s, is now in charge of the Conservative party. In advance of the general election, could time be found for a statement as to whether the right hon. Member for Chingford is a reformed character in this matter? Has he changed his spots? A great deal has been written about this matter in the public prints. Before the House goes to the polls, we should have an answer one way or the other. There is a powerful lead letter in *The Guardian* today stating that there is an obligation of the kind for which I asked last Thursday for the clearance of the late Airey Neave. As the Leader of the House is present, there is an obligation for the clearance of the late Sir Maurice Oldfield.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration.

I have listened with great attention to what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I regret that I do not consider that the matter which he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. I therefore cannot submit his application to the House.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Not at this moment. I have received four further applications for debates under Standing Order No. 20 on the proposed poll tax in England and Wales. I propose to call only one—that of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) which is in broad terms. According to "Erskine May", page 350,

> "A further application on the same subject on the same day . . . will not normally be accepted by the Chair."

I cannot therefore accept further applications on the subject of a poll tax in England and Wales, but I will hear the hon. Member for Blackburn.

Rating System

3.35 pm

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely

"the proposals for the poll tax in England and Wales and its differential impact in different regions."

The matter is obviously specific. The urgency is that the Government published a Green Paper, Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government", on 28 January 1986. They set a consultation period until 31 July 1986. The right hon. Member for Mole Valley (Mr. Baker), then Secretary of State for the Environment, said in the House:

"The pace of further developments . . . will depend on the outcome of the consultation process."—*[Official Report*, 28 *January* 1986; Vol. 90, c. 798.]

All local authority associations, including the Conservative-dominated Association of District Councils, have damned the proposals for a poll tax, and so have many others. Opposition to the poll tax in England and Wales is as widespread as it is in Scotland. Ministers, knowing this, have dodged and refused debates in the House, and any detail of the impact has had to be dragged from them. *[Interruption.]*

The importance of this is clear. A poll tax is unheard of in the western world outside the United Kingdom. It is a medieval tax. It will hit all those on low incomes, including widows, pensioners, families with adult children and the single unemployed everywhere. It will hit inner London and widen the north-south divide. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The application is being made to me and I want to hear it.

Mr. Straw: A poll tax will aggravate inner-city problems. All 40 authorities which would bear the greatest burden of poll tax are to be found in inner London and in the metropolitan counties. The 20 authorities which would benefit most are in the south of England. I give just one example. The Secretary of State for the Environment said that under his proposals the same local tax bill would be paid for the same standard of service. Yet in Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale and Darwen and Hyndburn, the poll tax would be about £200 per head, twice the amount in Gillingham, Kent, where expenditure is only 33 per cent. higher.

The proposals in the Green Paper were made to this Parliament. Ministers should have the guts to debate them in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover) *rose*——

Hon. Members: Throw him out.

Mr. Skinner: Oh, yes—not you; only Labour.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has caused me to lose my place—namely,

"the proposals for the poll tax in England and Wales and its differential impact in different regions."

Again, I have listened with great care to what the hon. Member for Blackburn has said, but I regret that I do not consider that the matter which he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. I therefore cannot submit his application to the House.

Points of Order

3.39 pm

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Have we not now heard a complete abuse on two occasions of Standing Order No. 20? I submit that the last application was purely politics.

The first application was a smear against a former Member of the House whose crest is over the entrance to this Chamber. Would it not be in the interests of the House if some procedure were devised under which applications under Standing Order No. 20 were submitted to you in advance so that you could sift out what was bogus and what was not, before, in my submission, the rules of the House are completely and utterly abused, as has happened on these two occasions?

Mr. Speaker: The Standing Order No. 20 procedure is a prized time for Back Benchers and it must not be abused. However, those applications were submitted to me in advance and if they are in order I am bound to hear them.

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. While fully accepting your ruling on the Standing Order No. 20 application by my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), in view of the serious implications for many families in the inner cities of England and Wales, would it be possible for you to use your good offices to influence the Leader of the House to make a statement some time this week?

Mr. Speaker: The Leader of the House will have heard that. It is not a matter for me.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As may well be known, on a number of occasions I have had reason to cross swords with the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) about points of order. However, I have never before heard him behave in such a disgraceful manner as he has done today. Would it not be proper, Mr. Speaker, for a reprimand to be given to him for behaving like a bounder and a cad?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman's application was in order and it is up to him how he puts it. I shall take Mr. Marlow.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): On a brief point of order, Mr. Speaker, and a disturbing one. If there is to be a rat hunt in this House, I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that vermin will not be found on this side of the Chamber.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would not raise this point of order except that we are at the stage of Dissolution and it is a matter of some importance to the House. As you will appreciate, tomorrow is the last Prime Minister's Question Time before the election. A week ago today, after the right hon. Lady's statement, I wrote to her on behalf of Opposition Members asking why, for four months, she told the House that no inquiry was necessary into the treason allegations when in fact an inquiry was taking place at the same time. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is usually meticulous in replying promptly to correspondence. I have received an acknowledgement, but not a reply from the Prime Minister — *[Interruption.]*—in the intervening week. Is there any way, Mr. Speaker, in which you can help us to ensure that, before Question Time tomorrow, we have information from the Prime Minister to explain why, for four months, she told the House far less than the truth?

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Gentleman has not raised a matter of order, but it will doubtless have been heard by the Leader of the House and by other right hon. Members on the Government Front Bench.

Later—

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On another point of order altogether, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Well——

Mr. Faulds: A real point of order, unlike most that appear from the Benches opposite and these Benches sometimes. Could you explain to us, Sir: those of us who are eager to pay the normal courtesies to you — not eager to see you go, but eager to pay the normal courtesies in bidding you farewell and a very successful campaign for your return—when are we by this rearrangement of the old traditional procedures allowed to do so? Will it be late on Friday? Will it be early on Monday? Could the House and those hon. Members who are eager to pay their proper respects to you be allowed some sort of information as to when this is allowed to happen?

Mr. Speaker: This matter was raised yesterday and I propose to make a statement about it tomorrow. I can tell the hon. Gentleman now that on Friday I propose to remain in the Chair after the proceedings are at an end to greet and say farewell to hon. Members who may wish to do so. Furthermore, hon. Members who are retiring from Parliament and may happen to be here on Monday will be welcome to come to my house between 12 noon and 1pm for a glass of sherry.

Mr. Faulds: Those of us who will be returning to this place——

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): What about those with no chance?

Mr. Faulds: Those of us who will be returning to this place who will, unfortunately, by other commitment be unable to bid you farewell on Friday, will we be welcome to your house, Sir, on Monday?

Mr. Speaker: I shall have to see whether I can afford it.

Appellate Committee (Proceedings)

3.43 pm

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I rise to raise with you, Sir, a point of order of which I have given you notice. As a courtesy, I have also given notice to the Lord Chancellor and to the Clerk of the Parliaments since they clearly also have an interest in ths matter.

It is my submission that there is supposed to be published in the *Official Report* of each House of Parliament, all proceedings in Parliament.

Members of both Houses are entitled to draw from, respectively, the Vote Office of the House of Commons, and the Printed Paper Office of the House of Lords, the *Official Reports* of the proceedings in Parliament of the other House: which *Official Reports* are also available for sale to the public.

The proceedings of the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords are "Proceedings in Parliament": yet they are not available either to Members of the House of Commons, or to the public, as *Official Reports*. I would therefore be most grateful to you, as I expect many outside both Houses would also be, if you would be good enough to arrange for the proceedings of the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords to be made available to Members of the House of Commons and, indeed, therefore to the public in the same manner as are also the *Official Reports* of all other proceedings in the other House of Parliament.

I should like to add two points. Those proceedings are in no way analogous to private Bill proceedings. They are proceedings which define the public general law as passed by both Houses of Parliament. Secondly, Select Committees of this House as well as individual Members in debate may need to quote those proceedings, and it is both ludicrous and anomalous that they should have to rely on *Times* law reports, accurate or inaccurate as the case may be, of those crucial proceedings in Parliament, rather than on an *Official Report* of them.

I do not expect you, Mr. Speaker, to be able to rule on this today; but I would be most grateful if it were possible for you to do so tomorrow. I am most obliged to you for hearing me.

Dr. John G. Blackburn (Dudley, West) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: On the same matter?

Dr. Blackburn: Yes, Sir. Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) said that he would wait for a decision, not only as an act of courtesy, but as this is a delicate matter. One of the cases bears on my constituency and relates to the motor industry. If that information was available, it would not only help planning and financial investment, but would have a direct effect on jobs in my constituency. Therefore, I take this opportunity to support my hon. Friend on this important point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. Member for Dudley, West (Dr. Blackburn) for what he has said and the hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) for raising this important matter. I shall, indeed, look into it and do my best to make a statement to the House on this tomorrow.

Dangerous Substances

3.50 pm

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to extend the application of industrial hazard regulations to include all sites containing potentially dangerous substances; and for connected purposes.

First, I should declare an interest as president of the Association of Scientific, Technological and Managerial Staffs. This will be the last ten-minute Bill that will be presented before the Dissolution of Parliament. Nevertheless, it is an important measure.

My Bill would extend the role of the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984. At the moment those regulations cover only 200 sites. Some 1,300 sites are not covered by those regulations, but they are covered by the Notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substances Regulations 1982. The difference between those regulations is that the Notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Regulations are much weaker. For instance, they do not include controls on the handling of dangerous substances. There is no requirement on them to draw up, on site or off, emergency plans concerning the public. Indeed, there is no requirement for them to inform the public as to what steps they should take during an emergency. It is only recently that the operators were required to notify the Health and Safety Executive, but thanks to pressure from the trade unions and the environmental lobby, operators can no longer keep them secret; they must reveal them, Even so, the public are not made aware of them.

If the regulations could be brought within the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984, operators would be required to do the following. They would be required to produce on-site and off-site emergency plans, provide information to members of the public about what to do if an emergency occurs and convince the Health and Safety Executive that the plant they operate is being run safely. Those requirements are good so far as they go, but they could be better. It is certainly an improvement on the other requirements. The effect of the regulations applies only to the larger plants that are handling chemicals in very large quantities. The other quantities that are being handled by smaller plants are just as dangerous but at the moment they are escaping these regulations. For instance, incidents involving liquefied petroleum gas, which is better known as calor gas, or half a ton of chlorine may be just as dangerous as incidents where chemicals are being handled in far larger quantities in major plants. My Bill would include the other 1,200 sites that are handling these dangerous chemicals.

The extension of the CIMAH regulations will have one further effect. It will reverse the Government's policy of reducing the numbers of Health and Safety inspectors. The Government have only just removed the ban on the recruitment of inspectors. That is disgraceful and callous, and shows an uncaring policy.

Another difficulty with regard to the Health and Safety Inspectorate is that their remuneration is pitched far too low at the moment, so there is a difficulty in recruitment. I hope that the increase that the Institution of Professional Civil Servants has applied for will be received favourably because it will increase remuneration and make it easier to recruit inspectors. There is a need for them. They are interested not only in remuneration but in health and

[Mr. Doug Hoyle]

safety. Indeed, there is a great demand for that. Having fewer inspectors means that health and safety is going by the board. It is difficult to do a job and improve health and safety when at the same time we have a Government committed to deregulation and Victorian values.

In his recent report, the chief safety inspector said:

"There is a disquieting increase in industrial accidents".

That is especially true of the chemical industry, for which the fatal and major accident rate has risen from 77·1 per 100,000 employees in 1981 to 104·3 per 100,000 employees in 1986. That represents an increase of 35 per cent. in the past five years. That means that human blood has been spilled on the floor of chemical plants and that is due to the cut in the number of health and safety inspectors that has occurred since the Government took office.

Recently there have been three major accidents. The BP Grangemouth explosions caused the death of three people. Houses 20 miles away were shaken by the explosions and people telephoned the emergency services in the belief that an earthquake had taken place. There was a serious fire at the Coalite plant—a matter that my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) has frequently raised in the House. We discovered that, at that plant, dioxin was still stocked despite the fact that the company had said that it had got rid of it in 1968.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): 1978.

Mr. Hoyle: I bow to my hon. Friend's superior knowledge.

The plant had claimed that it had got rid of its stores of dioxin in 1978, but that was not so. There was also a major fire at ICI Billingham, which killed one person.

If that is the state of affairs at major sites, one shudders to think what health and safety conditions are like at smaller sites; that is why I wish to bring those sites within the remit of my Bill.

If my Bill is implemented it will lead to the recruitment of extra factory inspectors. It will also lead to greater safety and protection not only for the people working on the sites but for the public. I believe that, unless something is done and such measures are adopted, sooner or later we shall have a British Bhopal.

I believe that the public have a right to know whether they are sitting on a time bomb. For that reason, I have introduced this Bill. I realise that, as it has been introduced so late, we shall not make much progress. However, with the general election on the way, I believe that the public have a right to know about such matters. Health and safety should be one of the major election issues. I hope that I shall obtain leave to bring in this Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Doug Hoyle, Mr. Don Dixon, Mr. Frank Cook, Mr. Ernie Ross, Mr. Chris Smith, Mr. Ian Mikardo, Dr. M. S. Miller, Mr. James Lamond, Mr. Dennis Skinner, Mr. Stan Thorne, Mr. Stan Crowther and Mr. Richard Caborn.

DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES

Mr. Doug Hoyle accordingly presented a Bill to extend the application of industrial hazard regulations to include all sites containing potentially dangerous substances; and for connected purposes; And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday and to be printed. [Bill 161.]

Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. *(Scotland)* Bill (Allocation of Time)

3.58 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): I beg to move,

That the Order of the House [11th February] be supplemented as follows:

Lords Amendments

1.—(1) The proceedings on Consideration of Lords Amendments shall be completed at this day's sitting and, subject to the provisions of the Order [11th February], those proceedings shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion three hours after the commencement of the proceedings on the Motion for this Order.

(2) Paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(3) No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, the proceedings shall be made except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

(4) If the proceedings are interrupted by a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on the Motion shall be added to the period at the end of which the proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion.

(5) If the House is adjourned, or the sitting is suspended, on this day before the expiry of the period at the end of which the proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion, no notice shall be required of a Motion made at the next sitting by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order.

2.—(1) For the purpose of bringing any proceedings to a conclusion in accordance with paragraph 1 above—

(a) Mr. Speaker shall first put forthwith any Question which has already been proposed from the Chair and not yet decided and, if that Question is for the amendment of the Lords Amendment, shall then put forthwith the Question on any further Amendment to the said Lords Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown and on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth agree or disagree with the Lords in the said Lords Amendment or, as the case may be, in the said Lords Amendment as amended;

(b) Mr. Speaker shall then designate such of the remaining Lords Amendments as appear to him to involve questions of Privilege and shall—

(i) put forthwith the Question on any Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown to a Lords Amendment and then put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth agree or disagree with the Lords in their Amendment, or, as the case may be, in their Amendment as amended;

(ii) put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in a Lords Amendment;

(iii) put forthwith with respect to the Amendments designated by Mr. Speaker which have not been disposed of the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendments; and

(iv) put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in all the remaining Lords Amendments;

(c) as soon as the House has agreed or disagreed with the Lords in any of their Amendments Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith a separate Question on any other Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown relevant to that Lords Amendment.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

Stages subsequent to first Consideration of Lords Amendments

3. The proceedings on any further Message from the Lords on the Bill shall be brought to a conclusion one hour after the commencement of the proceedings.

4. For the purpose of bringing those proceedings to a conclusion—

(a) Mr. Speaker shall first put forthwith any Question which has already been proposed from the Chair and not yet decided, and shall then put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown which is related to the Question already proposed from the Chair;

(b) Mr. Speaker shall then designate such of the remaining items in the Lords Message as appear to him to involve questions of Privilege and shall—

(i) put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown on any item;

(ii) in the case of the remaining items designated by Mr. Speaker, put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in their said Proposals; and

(iii) put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in all the remaining Lords Proposals.

Supplemental

5. — (1) In this paragraph 'the proceedings' means proceedings on any further Message from the Lords on the Bill, on the appointment and quorum of a Committee to draw up Reasons and the Report of such a Committee.

(2) Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown for the consideration forthwith of the Message or, as the case may be, for the appointment and quorum of the Committee.

(3) A Committee appointed to draw up Reasons shall report before the conclusion of the sitting at which they are appointed.

(4) Paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(5) No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, the proceedings shall be made except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

(6) If the proceedings are interrupted by a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on the Motion shall be added to the period at the end of which the proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion.

The motion provides for three hours of debate, which begins now. We must get through a large number of amendments, but the bulk of them are technical and drafting amendments. I believe that the period of three hours provides plenty of time for discussion of the issues of substance raised in the amendments. However, it would be unfortunate if we were to use up time discussing the allocation of time motion. I hope that the Opposition will agree that that is sensible.

4.0 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): As so often happens, the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Ancram) is wrong. We intend to say a little about the timetable motion. I assure him that we wish to leave adequate time to raise or amendments and ensure that they are debated. I find the allocation unsatisfactory, for reasons to which I shall refer in a moment or two.

I recognise the pressures on Governments and that Ministers like to get to their legislative programmes. I accept, too, that, on occasions, there are double standards in speeches made in debates of this kind. I do not deny that, probably in a month or two, we shall use timetable motions and defend the principle, but we must examine the merits of every case as a matter of perspective—as a matter of keeping a sense of proportion. The Government have the duty to think about what is right for the House and for the parliamentary process. They have got the balance wrong on this occasion, and I shall attempt briefly to persuade the House of that fact.

The Under-Secretary of State briefly introduced his motion. It is a supplementary motion, tacked on as almost an afterthought to the main guillotine motion, which, of course, truncated the Committee proceedings. Normally the Leader of the House or the shadow Leader of the House would perform on such occasions, but this time we have had to be content with the Under-Secretary of State. I make no complaint about that, except to remark that he is rather more shameless in his approach to such matters than is the Leader of the House, who normally, probably because of long contact with the Prime Minister, has a certain self-deprecating style. He smuggles bad news and offensive material into debates in a way that is quite endearing. There is always an air of apology about such matters. He implies that he is only the messenger. The defence is always one of incrimination, that he is bringing the news from some other Minister. On this occasion, of course, the Under-Secretary of State is attempting to bungle through the remaining stages of a highly controversial measure in three hours, and three hours alone. This is not satisfactory, partly because of the enormously long consideration of the workability and practicability of the measure, both in the House and in another place.

The amendments deal with issues of genuine concern. During the long Committee stage, despite some of the misplaced sarcasm in an earlier debate, Ministers were forced to give ground. We now have a series of specific but important issues dealing, for example, with the definition of mentally handicapped, and with students, in the context of exemption from poll tax. The amendments raise complicated arguments; for example, about the definition of severe impairment. Why are we talking about mentally handicapped people, but not about physically disabled people? A range of issues are raised in the amendments and in the variations to the Lords amendments that have been put down by my hon. Friends and myself.

No one who has followed the debates, even in the most cursory way, will fail to recognise that, in connection with the protection of the living standards of students, there are severe reservations about what the Government are proposing, even after the rather ill-defined and incomplete amendment. Such anxiety is not the preserve of the National Union of Students and individual constituents, but has been reflected by principals and vice-chancellors, who are genuinely concerned about the ability of universities to compete for students in the circumstances that the Government envisage.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Would my hon. Friend care to consider the significance of the fact that, on this major piece of legislation, which drastically changes the rating system into this new poll tax idea, it is a matter of such importance to the Government that they have managed to muster three Back Benchers and one PPS to discuss these issues, that my admirable young hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson), out

[Mr. Andrew Faulds]

of his usual charitable inclinations, had to lend his backside to their Benches to make them look healthier; and, of course, that he was trying out a future position on those Benches in government?

Mr. Dewar: My hon. Friend has made a fair mathematical point with characteristic subtlety. He is right. There is a proper degree of diffidence among some Conservative Members about appearing in such debates these days.

The complicated matters to which I have referred and which we shall debate in a short compass have been swept up into a brief period of parliamentary time. The debate is taking place in injury time—the twilight days—with a Scottish Office team that is already living on borrowed time. The exceptions are not satisfactorily defined. We are still getting an enormous number of representations from people who have no political axe to grind but who are alarmed at what is happening. My first point is that the timetable motion does not give the House the opportunity it should have to consider, debate and reach a measured conclusion on such matters.

One other factor of a more fundamental nature must be canvassed. We are looking, as my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) said by way of an intervention, at a remarkable fiscal innovation. We are looking at an almost unprecedented poll tax, certainly in the sophisticated financial systems of Western Europe. It is a poll tax, and I use that term unashamedly. Presumably I shall no longer be criticised for doing so. It was given the Prime Minister's imprimatur only this week as the proper expression. I was delighted to hear the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs refer to the "poll tax" in the proceedings last night on the Diplomatic and Consular Premises Bill. It is a poll tax. The hon. Gentleman was quite right to use that term. It is an imposition of so much per head, straight across the board. It is a tax that is widely seen as regressive and impractical. It has little support across the range of Scottish public opinion.

I recognise that the motive for introducing the poll tax — the volte face that we have seen since 1983 in Government thinking—is imagined electoral advantage. Conservative Members are wrong. It will be an unpopular imposition and will become much more unpopular over the next year or two, if it reaches the statute book and, even more relevantly, if it is ever implemented. I have made the point before that we know that an irreversible rise is built into the poll tax. With the treatment of commercial and industrial rates we shall narrow the tax base — the buoyancy factor — in a remarkable fashion. The poll tax will certainly escalate in a way that will greatly disappoint, and probably alarm, those who may calculate temporary personal advantage from it.

I make those points because the depth of opposition to, and the concern about, the tax puts a large question mark over the propriety of forcing the measure through in this way. From a large amount of independent evidence, we know that there is concern about its impact. I saw a report —I am sure that the Minister is familiar with it—from Professor Hughes at the department of economics at Edinburgh university. He did a calculation based upon, I gather, an extensive and cheerful survey of a sample of Scottish households to try to take into account the impact of the social security changes that are so interlinked with the poll tax and rebate system, and the impact of the tax itself. His conclusion was that one needed a household income of well over £400 a week before one was likely to benefit from the changes. That underlines what I have said about its regressive nature.

I have another report. Again, it is from an area of the country that has not traditionally been seen as in alliance with my party. I refer to the plea — that is the correct word — from the convenor of the Highland regional council, whose planning department, according to *The Scotsman*, has come to the conclusion that the effect of the tax in the Highlands will be

> "staggeringly different from the Government's intentions set out in the Green Paper.
>
> According to the department, up to 91 per cent. of households in the more remote parts would be worse off and the local taxation burden on such communities would rise by more than 230 per cent."

It is not just a plea from our heartland and support. We are articulating a view that is beginning to be painfully reflected in different parts of Scotland. I believe that the Government should even now think again. My plea is a simple one. I do not think it is right for Ministers to force the Bill through in this way and at this time. We all know that there is an election in only a few weeks' time. It would be best to suspend judgment on the matter now and leave it to the judgment of the electorate, to see what the people have to say about it. If the Bill is forced through with a last-gasp guillotine motion, we shall be lumbered with an unwanted and ill-advised tax that will be deeply resented.

Politicians talk — I did so a moment ago myself — about propriety, but that is too nice a consideration. There are deeper and more basic considerations here. It is a matter of a feeling for Scotland and respect for Scottish opinion, and it would be wrong to bulldoze the legislation through in the dying days of this Parliament. To do that would be to show the kind of insensitivity that damages trust, not in the Chamber, but in the communities of Scotland.

We unashamedly dislike the measure. It is wrong and we are implacably hostile to its implementation. We do not approve of the decision to force it through in this way. It is for those reasons and because we know that, on this and many other issues, we speak for such a wide coalition of Scottish opinion that I shall, in a while, invite my right hon. and hon. Friends to divide against the motion.

4.12 pm

Mr. Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central): I shall be brief, and I mean it — unlike the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar).

I was surprised by the complaint made by the hon. Member for Garscadden, which was not about the shortage of time that is available in this session of Parliament to discuss the legislation. It has spent many hours in Committee, in another place and in this Chamber. Presumably his objection is that, at this late stage in this Parliament, the House is making decisions on the final shape of the legislation.

I do not understand that objection. What could be fairer and more democratic than that the Government should put specific proposals before the electorate in Scotland about the community charge and the abolition of domestic rates? The proposals are in no way uncertain or ambiguous: they are specific proposals, enabling the voters in Scotland to know precisely what the choice is between the present system of domestic rates and the community charge proposed in the legislation. I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman, who is normally fair-minded about these matters, should completely ignore the fact that, as we go into the election, there will be no doubt in people's minds about what the Conservative party is proposing in terms of the community charge, or about what the Labour and other Opposition parties are proposing—they are all proposing the status quo.

Mr. Faulds *rose*——

Mr. Fletcher: I said that I would be brief, so I shall not give way.

The other parties are all proposing that we should keep the present system of domestic rates; the effect of that, as it is in Edinburgh, will be to increase again by 30 per cent. the cost of rates to many people who cannot afford that amount of tax.

The Government believe that the new system is a fairer way of raising local revenue. The Opposition believe that the present system is fairer. In the time-honoured phrase, we shall be going to the country now, and the thing to do is to trust the people.

4.15 pm

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): I support the views expressed by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), who spoke of the coalition of interests in Scotland against the Government's proposals for reform of local taxation. I hope that, after the election, the hon. Gentleman will again talk of a coalition of Scottish interests, and will be prepared to participate in these discussions if the electorate decides that it is appropriate to have cross-party government.

Speaking about the timetable motion, the Minister has made the quite astonishing suggestion that the matters to be considered this afternoon are purely technical. They are far from that. Some of the amendments passed in another place go to the very heart of the Government's Bill and of the principles that the Minister has earlier stated. They go against the concept of universality—that everyone in Scotland must pay, whatever his ability to pay, at least 20 per cent. of the new poll tax. I do not see how the Minister can set that aside as purely technical, and no doubt we shall be discussing that in more detail later.

Since the Bill was considered in Committee and in another place, a number of further matters and representations have come to light which make it quite improper—I repeat the word used by the hon. Member for Garscadden—to proceed with the legislation in the face of the increasing evidence of the inequitable way in which the tax will operate, and the improper way in which it will bear heavily upon the majority of the Scottish people.

The study to which the hon. Member for Garscadden referred, by Professor Gordon Hughes of the university of Edinburgh's department of economics, makes it clear that the main burden of the poll tax will fall on those with gross household incomes ranging from 70 per cent. to 150 per cent. of the average household income. In other words, the bulk of the Scottish people will be cowering under the blows inflicted by this insensitive and out-of-touch Government.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Maclennan: This is an all-too-short debate, and the hon. Gentleman should take up any matters that may concern him with the responsible Minister.

Professor Hughes stated, in conclusion:

> "It should be noted that, if the community charge is as expensive and difficult to collect as some fear, the average local tax burden of all groups will increase because of the high levels of the community charges required to replace domestic rates. The question of implementation must therefore be the main concern about the effect of this proposed reform".

Professor Hughes has raised issues that were raised in Standing Committee but were not authoritatively examined—certainly not by the Government. However, they were raised by Opposition Members of all parties.

It has also been made clear—some of the Lords amendments touch on the point—that the above-average increase in local taxes due to the community charge, in households whose heads are aged between 45 and 59, confirms the belief of many of us that the poll tax will bear heavily upon broad sections of the community which the Government have tried to suggest they were seeking to protect. In households whose heads are aged between 45 and 59, families with children over the age of 18 who are still living at home will bear the burden of the tax change.

These are authoritative objections and they go to the root of the proposals, which the Government have presented as an attempt to relieve the Scottish people of an unloved tax. The hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Sir A. Fletcher) wholly misrepresented the position when he suggested that other political parties in Scotland have not put forward alternatives. Not only has the Scottish National party put forward its proposals for a local income tax, but the two alliance parties have done so. Furthermore, in another place, the official Labour Opposition also supported proposals for the introduction of a local income tax.

In a series of answers to parliamentary questions from my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) on 8 April and, subsequently, from myself, the Minister demonstrated how right we have been to advocate local income tax. On the equalised figures that he has, most Scottish people living on the incomes that I have summarised, in the groups that are mentioned by Professor Hughes, will be substantially better off under the local income tax scheme.

No doubt this measure will be a centrepiece of the Prime Minister's speech in Scotland later this week. It was brought forward in a hurry without adequate consultation and without consent. Its sole aim is to seek to save the Government from the embarrassment caused by the revaluation that they put in hand.

The Scottish people regard this tax as anathema. That is one reason why the Conservative party in Scotland will go down to humiliating defeat on 11 June. The Minister who has been saddled with this measure may well prove to be its most spectacular victim. He has fought it through Parliament against the overwhelming opposition of all those hon. Members who represent the true interests of the Scottish people.

The impropriety of seeking in a matter of a few hours to wipe out a form of taxation which, though inequitable and unloved, has lasted for 200 years, beggars constitutional precedent. The Minister has done nothing for his own reputation or for that of the Government in seeking to proceed in the manner that he has proceeded today. There are many significant and substantive

[Mr. Maclennan]

amendments and they have to be considered in the all-too-short time available. Substantial debates cannot take place. The amendments touch upon the position of students and the definition of the registered disabled and mentally handicapped and cannot possibly receive proper consideration in such a short time.

I predict that if this measure is placed on the statute book it will not last five years. It will be repealed and replaced by a tax that is in accordance with proper principles of local taxation, related to an ability to pay. That reform will be welcomed by the people of Scotland as a whole. Even though the Labour party has not been in the van, it will follow us in introducing an effective local income tax.

4.22 pm

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): I shall be brief, because many hon. Members want to take part in the debate. This measure is a kind of constitutional travesty. Never in the whole history of Parliament has a basic tax that is to be applied to the entire population of Scotland and in future to the population of England and Wales been treated with such contempt and brought in as a guillotined measure. It should be subject to measured debate rather than to the guillotine. It is a constitutional travesty to impose a guillotine of this magnitude in the very last syllable of recorded time in this most meretricious of all Parliaments and Governments. That is my first and most crucial point.

Secondly, this measure not only deals with taxation which per se should put it beyond this kind of behaviour, even from this Government, but affects the well-being of the majority of the British people. The figures were not given of those who would benefit and those who would not. On the scale of comparative poverty and wealth, in every case those who are rich will benefit and those who are poor will suffer.

Mr. Michael Forsyth (Stirling): That is just rubbish. How can the hon. Government possibly argue that, when poor pensioners living in their family homes will find themselves considerably better off? How can the hon. Gentleman possibly argue that everyone who is poor will be worse off?

Mr. Buchan: The hon. Gentleman should look at the position of poor pensioners in council houses and in some areas in his own constituency. I agree that in the case of four pensioners living together, one can make a comparison with less well-off households, but in 99 per cent. of cases the rich will benefit and the poor will suffer.

If the hon. Gentleman wants a comparison he can look at the rateable value on the Prime Minister's house in Dulwich. This measure will in future apply to England and Wales. It is precisely because it will be extended that it has been brought in in this desperate way. All the evidence is that the same pattern will be applied in England and Wales and as a result, the Prime Minister will be given £140 a month. This measure will hit pensioners, council tenants and people on below-average wages, but less than about 15 per cent. of the top earners will lose.

To benefit from this measure a person will need to earn about £558 a week. That is over £2,000 a month, well into £25,000 a year. The average family will lose. One thinks especially of comparatively poor families with children of 18, 19 or 20. They will lose. The additional rates on council houses in my constituency vary for a three-apartment house from £33 to £40 per month. For a four-apartment house the figure is £35 to £47 per month. The tenants of those houses, whatever their earning capacity, will be worse off to the tune of £20 a month for a couple and £40 to £60 a month if there is another earner. Compare that with the Prime Minister, who will benefit by £140 a month. Council house occupants in my constituency will face an extra bill of £20 to £60.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman seems to be basing his claims about gainers and losers on the present rating system. Can he tell the House whether he believes that the present rating system in Scotland is fair?

Mr. Buchan: If the hon. Gentleman had given us enough time to discuss this measure, we could have looked at alternative methods. At the moment, we are dealing with a measure rushed through at the very last point of time in order to obscure, among other things, the real horrors that are being applied. This is not the only aspect. This is part of the open manifesto, but we must also consider the Government's hidden manifesto. The Government claim that they will move from direct taxation to indirect taxation, which means value added tax, and that will hit the poor. Direct taxation has been cut, but the average taxpayer is nearly £7 a week worse off as a result of the increase in indirect tax.

The Government are trying to beat their hidden manifesto by running to the country and they do not have the courage to perpetuate their policies for another week. They are running to the country a year before their time in order to hustle through measures like this and avoid the measures that are clearly adumbrated in the hidden manifesto.

The Tory Commissioner in Brussels, Lord Cockfield, who is an appointee of the Prime Minister, is proposing to extend value added tax to books. At one time the Conservative party might have resisted that. It is also proposed to extend it to other publications, to babies' and children's clothes and to fuel and food. That is the background to which this tax has been rushed through.

I hope that the people of Scotland, who have been betrayed by the Government, will know about the results that we are seeing here and about the monstrosity that is being committed, and that they will reject the Conservatives at the polls in three weeks. This is a damnable and in many ways an unconstitutional measure and it will certainly hit the pockets of all the working people of Scotland.

4.29 pm

Mr. Michael Forsyth (Stirling): I am astonished at the speech by the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan). The hon. Gentleman never ceases to astonish me. He seemed to be arguing that pensioners who had saved a little money during the course of their lives and who are on low incomes should subsidise people in work who are earning good money. That is the substance of his argument. He seemed to be arguing in favour of retaining a rating system that he admits is unfair. I wonder why. The explanation is obvious. The hon. Gentleman likes the rating system because it allows his party to remain in local government and force pensioners and others with savings and low incomes to pay for the extravagance of his colleagues in power in local government. He knows that when the Bill is on the statute book the game will be up for the Labour Left in local government in Scotland because no longer will those people be able to ask the minority to pay for their extravagance and their policies.

If, as the hon. Gentleman argues, the Bill is so unfair and so unpopular, why are he and the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) so anxious to prevent it from getting on the statute book? If it is so unpopular in Scotland and if it will do so much harm, they have the ideal opportunity in the forthcoming general election campaign to convince the people. The reality is that, even in these last desperate hours, they are struggling to prevent the Bill from being passed because they know that it will be popular, even with those who will have to pay a little more, because the people of Scotland recognise that the system proposed in the Bill may not be perfect, but it is very much better than the rating system that we have. The people of Scotland are not so venal as those in the Labour party and the alliance, who think that, just because some people will have to pay a bit more, that is a reason for not having the legislation.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland does not want the Bill to reach the statute book because he does not want the people of Scotland to have a clear choice. He has regaled the House with long speeches—half an hour on Second Reading and goodness knows how many hours during the 120 hours in Committee. He has failed, despite repeated challenges, to explain how his local income tax would work. He says: "We in the alliance have said that we are in favour of a local income tax," but he has not explained how that tax would not result in people in rural areas paying far more towards local government than they will under the community charge or at present under the rating system. He has failed to do so despite repeated challenges. He says that it is not his job to define how local income tax will work. He wishes to prevent the Bill from reaching the statute book so that there will not be a clear choice for the Scottish people.

The clear choice is that if they return a Conservative Government, they will see the abolition of the rating system and a fairer system instead, whereas if the Conservative Government are not returned, we shall have fudge and mudge. However, the hon. Gentleman and his party will never form a Government and people will be left with the rating system——

Mr. Maclennan: The people of Scotland, particularly those in the Highlands, know that although the rating system is bad, they will be substantially worse off under the Government's proposals. Dr. Arthur Midwinter has put to the Government the fact that seven out of 10 households in the Highlands region will pay substantially increased taxation as a result of the Government's proposals. That is a fact. On local income tax, the hon. Gentleman does not need a speech from me to draw attention to the facts, which demonstrate beyond peradventure that, under local income tax, the majority of Scottish people would be substantially better off than under the appallingly inequitable tax that the hon. Gentleman has been backing from the beginning.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman is like a cheap ticket tout. He sought to intervene when I criticised him for not spelling out how his local income tax policy would work, yet again he has failed to do so. Instead, he makes allegations about our policy and who would be disadvantaged by it. The hon. Gentleman fails to deal with the basic point, that, under his policy of a local income tax, people in the Highlands, with a narrow tax base, would pay far more than they will under the community charge or the present rating system.

In his speech on local income tax, the hon. Gentleman made great play about the effect on people with average incomes, but he does not seem to have noticed the answer that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary gave, which shows that a local income tax would be a disaster for the people of Scotland. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to promote such a policy, that is his business, but he owes it to the people of Scotland to explain how it will work and how it will be to their advantage. The fact is that, for the vast majority of people in the Highlands who at present are suffering under the rating system, the community charge will be a welcome relief.

It is true that those who are in work, who are able to pay and who have contributed nothing to local government in the past, will be required to do so, but the hon. Gentleman does not take into account the effect of the community charge on local government itself. He seems to imagine that the whole thing is static. The fact is that when the politicians in local government are subject to accountability, when they know that every decision that they make will have an effect on the pockets of the people who elect them, they will behave more responsibly.

It is important that the Bill is passed, not only so that the people of Scotland have a clear choice, but so that local government is given a guiding light for the way forward. The way forward is to be responsible and accountable to the people. By all means let us make local government take decisions at local level; let us remove some of the controls on expenditure that have been imposed from the centre, as we do in the Bill; but let us recognise that it is only by bringing accountability to the system that we shall achieve that aim.

The Bill has been discussed ad nauseam in the House. This view has come not just from Conservative Benches; significantly, every newspaper in Scotland has commented on the lamentable opposition from the Opposition parties. Every commentator, every group——

Mr. Dewar: Will the hon. Gentleman explain why some of the points that we pushed so enthusiastically and unrewardingly in Committee now appear as Government amendments?

Mr. Forsyth: If I may say so, the hon. Gentleman does his colleague, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) a great disservice. My instant reaction is that, based on the latter's performance in Committee and his muddled thinking—at one point he had to ask my hon. Friend the Minister what his own amendment meant—it is not surprising that he did not score many successes in Committee. If the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) finds that the arguments in the other place were aired more successfully, I should have thought that that was a criticism of his colleagues, not of my hon. Friend who is putting forward suggestions for change. Indeed, the fact that there are amendments before the House shows that my hon. Friend is being flexible in considering the matter.

My criticism of the Opposition is that on Second Reading, in Committee and during the Bill's passage

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through the other place, they singularly failed to come up with an alternative to what we have on offer. They have nailed their colours to the rating system, which is unfair, because it penalises people who improve their properties, those who have saved and those who have a stake in their property. It rewards extravagant and unprincipled Left-wing local authorities, in which I understand the hon. Member for Garscadden has some interest.

The people of Scotland are waiting for the Bill to become an Act. When it is, they will know that the hon. Member for Garscadden and his friends would repeal it if they won the election. I am sure that the people will give their verdict at the polls.

4.38 pm

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): Unlike the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), I do not intend to speak for long. I remind him that one of the reasons why we shall vote against the motion is that it is unfair and unjust. It is the job of a parliamentary Opposition, with different constituencies, to oppose measures that we consider to be deeply damaging to our electorate.

To some extent, I was surprised to listen to the claims made by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Sir A. Fletcher), followed by the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) and subsequently the hon. Member for Stirling. There were great calls to the Scottish people for the coming election. We know that the Bill would never have seen the light of day if the parliamentary majority in Scotland had control of legislation. It has been pushed through on the basis of English votes in the House of Commons because there is an overall United Kingdom majority for the Conservative party.

It is illogical for the hon. Members for Edinburgh, Central, and for Stirling to say that it will be sufficient to put the matter to the test of the electorate. If the Conservatives won the election, but their numbers were decimated in Scotland, would the Government say that they would drop the legislation? Having put the matter to the Scottish people, would they say that the legislation had been rejected because there was not sufficient support at the polls? That puts to the test Conservative Members' assertions that they are putting something to the Scottish people. They are not. It is part of the programme for the British people, and if the Scottish people take a different view, they will have to like it or lump it. In this case, they will be lumping it. They will have to pay out a substantial sum in cash.

The Government are to leave it to the electorate and the people, but to which electorate and people are they leaving it? I have no doubt that in the coming election the Scottish people will reject not only the Conservative party but the piece of legislation on which it has pinned its hopes. Is it not a mark of the Conservative party's desperation that, two years ago, it was looking around for something on which to get a grip? The Conservative party, to its eternal discredit, has produced a piece of legislation that will have a vicious impact on the people of Scotland. It will cause distress and hardship.

The Government say that it is a choice between the rating system and the community charge, but I can envisage no benefit to the people at large from this new system. I accept the Government's arguments against the rating system, which has long outlived its usefulness and any fairness. The Scottish National party and the alliance parties have proposed a local income tax, which would be based on ability to pay. The acid test will be whether it is fair. Will people have to pay more even though they may not have the income to do so? The abolition of domestic rates—much though I welcome the abolition—is spoilt by the introduction of the poll tax. If this measure ever comes into effect, the Government will bitterly regret what they have done. The dislocation caused will far outmeasure any of the temporary embarrassments felt by the Government during the rating revaluation about two years ago.

4.41 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I am fascinated to learn that the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. Wilson) comes to the House to suggest that the business on which Scottish Members spend their time is not relevant to Scotland but is relevant to the whole of the United Kindom. We believe that our separate Scottish laws are important, so much so that we spend many hours on them in Committee — many more than the hon. Gentleman has ever done.

Labour Members have a commendable record for the way in which they work on legislation that affects Scotland. We may not agree with what they do, but we will not criticise their work load. Sometimes they put their points badly and do not present them well, and sometimes they fluff them. That has been their record on the Bill—they have not won the arguments or presented them well — but one cannot argue with the fact that Labour Members attend the Committees and apply themselves.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) has a commendable record in dealing with Scottish legislation. Some of us think that, like most lawyers, he goes on a bit, but no one ever suggests that he does not carry out his duties properly and effectively. The hon. Member for Dundee, East is criticising not only Conservatives, but the Labour party, suggesting that Labour Members should not apply themselves so diligently to Scottish business because he judges it to be United Kingdom business. This is a piece of Scottish legislation and it is right that it should have been dealt with as it has been. Much time was spent on Second Reading and in Committee considering it.

The Opposition think that Conservative Members have suicidal tendencies, but that is not so. I invite Labour Members to tell me after the general election about their great pledge that they will win Tayside, North. That is called whistling in the dark anywhere else. The alliance candidate may have an argument with Labour Members, never mind me, on that.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): I tend to agree with the hon. Gentleman—he may just retain his seat, in which case he looks like being the shadow Secretary of State for Scotland after the election.

Mr. Walker: That is just about the most awful piece of nonsense to which I have ever listened. I believe that the Secretary of State for Scotland will be my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Pentlands (Mr. Rifkind). He is probably one of the most able and clever Secretaries of State that we have ever had. There is no doubt that he will retain his seat comfortably. I believe that any honest individual in the House would accept the fact that my right hon. and learned Friend will lead for the Conservatives in Scotland on this matter. He will be leading out front, as he does so ably and well.

Mr. Henderson: Unlike the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), our right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State can trust his No. 2 to handle the Bill effectively. Is my hon. Friend surprised that, during all the hours of consideration in Committee and on the Floor of the House, we still have not heard from the Scottish National party or from the other parts of the anti-Conservative alliance how their local income tax will work? Is it the kind of local income tax that will disadvantage the most deprived areas, or is it the kind of local income tax that will mean that people who live in areas of prudent local authorities will subsidise those who live in the areas of spendthrift local authorities?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The motion before the House is long and wordy, but I cannot find any reference in it to income tax. I hope that hon. Members will stick to the motion.

Mr. Walker: I do not want to be caught out twice in two days, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Once is enough. May I say that I regret that your comments yesterday have not been printed in *Hansard* and I hope that the matter will be put right. If one looks carefully, one will see that there is an omission at the beginning of the relevant business yesterday. The statement that you made and which I did not hear is not reported. I do not argue, but it should be printed. I just wanted to let you know about that, Sir. I have no wish to fall foul of you on two consecutive days——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I understand the point that the hon. Member is making. I have not studied *Hansard*, but I assure the hon. Member that I shall and, if there is any fault, I shall seek to have it corrected.

Mr. Walker: I have no doubt that you will do that, Sir. The object of drawing it to your attention was to see that the record was put right.

I return to why there should be a guillotine and why the community charge will be of benefit to people in Scotland, especially in my constituency. My hon. Friend the Minister may be interested to know that the rate demands in Scotland went out within the past two weeks, certainly they did in Tayside. I have not heard a single unfavourable comment on the community tax, but I can certainly fill a barrel with the unfavourable comments that I have received on the rates increases that have just been inflicted on the citizens of Tayside by the Labour administration, assisted in that enterprise by the nationalists. The people of Tayside have no doubt who is attempting to protect their best interests. People in north Tayside believe that the hon. Member for Dundee, East, who cannot even attend the House when his Bill is debated, is not the type of individual who should comment——

Mr. Maxton: The hon. Gentleman was not here yesterday.

Mr. Walker: Hon. Members may find it amusing, but from time to time I have a slight hearing defect, which is the result of my activities while I was on service for His Majesty. That is a matter of record, and I am not ashamed of it, but it gives me problems from time to time. I was present at that time, so that is not the problem.

It is unique for a party to go to a general election with legislation as interesting and, perhaps, as controversial as this, but it would be barmy even to think that any party would be so foolish as to do so if it did not genuinely believe that the new system was a substantial improvement on the existing system of local government taxation. Rates are unpopular with the public at large and people have condemned them, particularly the few who have to pay vast sums.

The Labour party has used the rating system more effectively than has any other local government party because it recognises that it can buy votes by spending other people's money. I congratulate the Labour party on having done that so successfully. Labour party Members are troubled because, if the system is changed, they will have the same opportunity to buy votes as they have done in the past. Everyone over the age of 18 will be required to contribute, which can only mean that they will take an interest in how the money is spent. Even those who are given income assistance in the form of rebates will take an interest because of the fact that they have to make a contribution.

The contribution is approximately the same as the cost of a television licence. There are figures on how many television licences exist among the lower paid, pensioners and those on supplementary benefit. I have no doubt that they will be capable also of paying the community charge, or at least the reduced rate that they will be required to pay. The people who will pay the full amount are those who can afford to pay. I have three adult daughters who enjoy the benefits of local authority services, and I think it is right that they should pay for them.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Can the hon. Gentleman explain why it is right that someone on a low wage should pay exactly the same as someone who earns an enormous amount of money?

Mr. Walker: I can explain that easily. Much of local authority expenditure comes from central taxation. Those on high incomes—whatever "high" is; it is relative—pay more income tax and buy more expensive products which carry more value added tax. Therefore, they contribute handsomely to the coffers of central Government. As it is the central Government, on behalf of the taxpayer, who pick up the bulk of the cost of local government services, it can be said that those on higher incomes are already making their contribution through central taxation.

The big problem with linking local authority expenditure to rates is that other local government expenditure affects central Government taxation. I mentioned earlier today that the Tayside region has put up its rates, which will put an unbearable additional burden on the Tayside health board. The board will have to find an additional £500,000, which means that £500,000 less will be spent on health services and facilities. The ratchet effect of this has meant that the Government have had to find a way to ensure that central Government expenditure is properly funded, as it is through taxation—that is, personal income tax, value added tax and corporation tax on profitable companies.

Those taxes fund the central Government's contribution to local government expenditure, so taxpayers who pay higher rates of tax are able to say, with hand on heart, "I am paying for my proper share of services." Anyone who uses additional facilities, such as

[Mr. Walker]

water, has to pay for the amount consumed, as determined by the water meter. Many provisions are available to cater for that, so it is right that those who can afford to pay should pay equally. In other words, those who use the same services should pay equally, and those who, for whatever reason, require income assistance — whether through supplementary benefit or in some other way—are catered for in the same way as students and others who have special requirements.

My hon. Friend the Secretary of State is to be congratulated on the way in which he has dealt with those who have special needs. I congratulate the Government on the way in which they have dealt with these matters. I am delighted that the Bill will be on the statute book as an Act before we go to the country.

Mr. Maxton: Will the hon. Member answer this question: if the Scottish people reject his Tory party at the next election and, by some mischance, the people of England return a Tory Government, will he demand that his Government withdraw this measure?

Mr. Walker: That is a nonsensical question, but I have no hesitation in answering it. I expect the Conservative party to do as well in Scotland as it did in 1983, if not better. I shall not make unrealistic claims——

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Why not? You always do.

Mr. Walker: I shall not make unrealistic claims, and I shall not be tempted by the less than silent Deputy Chief Whip of the Labour party. I say to the hon. Gentleman that we expect to do well and to return as the Government. I expect to be sitting in my place as the hon. Member for Tayside, North and I look forward to looking into the eyes of those hon. Members who are fortunate enough to return to the Labour Benches and to see whether they enjoy again their term in opposition.

4.56 pm

Mr. Ancram: In the few moments left before the debate ends, I will respond to some of the points made during——

Mr. Hugh Brown (Glasgow, Provan): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is there any reason for calling the Minister at this stage? There is nothing in the rules to suggest that the rest of us should not be called.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I understand that the Standing Order requires this debate to be concluded one hour after its commencement, which will be at 4.58 pm.

Mr. Faulds: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is an extremely important and radical piece of legislation. A number of us are very eager to speak; not only Members for Scotland but Scottish Members who represent English constituencies, because the implications of the legislation will spread into England. It is quite improper if, to help the Government's funk in running to the country, parliamentary discussion is prevented and that this is pursued and allowed by the Chair. We must have an opportunity——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must not reflect on the Chair in that way. I am the prisoner of Standing Orders. I have to carry out the Standing Orders which have been agreed to by the House. The Standing Orders govern the timetable.

Mr. Faulds: Further to that point of order, Sir. When will we have the opportunity to revive this debate, because it is an extremely important and very radical measure?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman now is, I must say, abusing the time of the House. I told him quite clearly that I am bound by Standing Orders, as is every other hon. Member, including him.

Mr. Ancram: During this debate we have heard nothing but black propaganda from the Opposition parties.

Mr. David Lambie (Cunningham, South): Could you quote the Standing Order on which you base your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I assure the hon. Gentleman that I would not refer to Standing Orders unless I had made sure that I was acting in accordance with them.

It being one hour after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker *put the Question, pursuant to the Order. [11 February]*

The House divided: Ayes 256, Noes 176.

Division No. 184] **[5 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Best, Keith
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brooke, Hon Peter
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Cartiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gorst, John
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, J. *(Ox'f W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pollock, Alexander
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey

Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hert'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Gerald Malone and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosemary
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fisher, Mark
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy

Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hughes, Dr Mark *(Durham)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*

Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Don Dixon and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Order of the House [11th February] be supplemented as follows:

Lords Amendments

1. — (1) The proceedings on Consideration of Lords Amendments shall be completed at this day's sitting and, subject to the provisions of the Order [11th February], those proceedings shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion three hours after the commencement of the proceedings on the Motion for this Order.

(2) Paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(3) No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, the proceedings shall be made except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

(4) If the proceedings are interrupted by a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on the Motion shall be added to the period at the end of which the proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion.

(5) If the House is adjourned, or the sitting is suspended, on this day before the expiry of the period at the end of which the proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion, no notice shall be required of a Motion made at the next sitting by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order.

2.—(1) For the purpose of bringing any proceedings to a conclusion in accordance with paragraph 1 above—

- *(a)* Mr. Speaker shall first put forthwith any Question which has already been proposed from the Chair and not yet decided and, if that Question is for the amendment of the Lords Amendment, shall then put forthwith the Question on any further Amendment to the said Lords Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown and on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth agree or disagree with the Lords in the said Lords Amendment or, as the case may be, in the said Lords Amendment as amended;
- *(b)* Mr. Speaker shall then designate such of the remaining Lords Amendments as appear to him to involve questions of Privilege and shall—
  - (i) put forthwith the Question on any Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown to a Lords Amendment and then put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth agree or disagree with the Lords in their Amendment, or, as the case may be, in their Amendment as amended;
  - (ii) put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in a Lords Amendment;
  - (iii) put forthwith with respect to the Amendments designated by Mr. Speaker which have not been disposed of the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendments; and
  - (iv) put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in all the remaining Lords Amendments;
- *(c)* as soon as the House has agreed or disagreed with the Lords in any of their Amendments Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith a separate Question on any other Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown relevant to that Lords Amendment.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

Stages subsequent to first Consideration of Lords Amendments

3. The proceedings on any further Message from the Lords on the Bill shall be brought to a conclusion one hour after the commencement of the proceedings.

4. For the purpose of bringing those proceedings to a conclusion—

- *(a)* Mr. Speaker shall first put forthwith any Question which has already been proposed from the Chair and not yet decided, and shall then put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown which is related to the Question already proposed from the Chair;
- *(b)* Mr. Speaker shall then designate such of the remaining items in the Lords Message as appear to him to involve questions of Privilege and shall—
  - (i) put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown on any item;
  - (ii) in the case of the remaining items designated by Mr. Speaker, put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in their said Proposals; and
  - (iii) put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in all the remaining Lords Proposals.

Supplemental

5. — (1) In this paragraph 'the proceedings' means proceedings on any further Message from the Lords on the Bill, on the appointment and quorum of a Committee to draw up Reasons and the Report of such a Committee.

(2) Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown for the consideration forthwith of the Message or, as the case may be, for the appointment and quorum of the Committee.

(3) A Committee appointed to draw up Reasons shall report before the conclusion of the sitting at which they are appointed.

(4) Paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(5) No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, the proceedings shall be made except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

(6) If the proceedings are interrupted by a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on the Motion shall be added to the period at the end of which the proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion.

Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. (Scotland) Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Clause 2

VALUATION ROLL NOT TO INCLUDE DOMESTIC SUBJECTS

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 1, line 9, after "the" insert "financial".

5.11 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 14, 26, 27, 29, 30, 34 to 36, 40 to 48, 51, 53, 55 to 62, 65, 68 to 77, 79 to 109 and 117 to 132.

Mr. Hugh Brown (Glasgow, Provan): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In case there was any misunderstanding when I intervened on a previous point of order, in no way was I challenging your ruling. We should all have known that the debate was limited to an hour. I confess that I was not aware of that, although I did know that the time taken on the guillotine motion was to come out of the time for debate. If there was any misunderstanding, I apologise.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. I would never expect him to reflect adversely on the Chair.

Mr. Ancram: I say to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan (Mr. Brown) that he and I are in the same position. During the past two debates on the Bill—the one on Third Reading and the one that has just finished—we were both talked out by others in the Chamber. This is the first occasion, therefore, that he and I have had to speak on the Bill for some time.

Hon. Members of an arithmetical frame of mind may have noticed already that the first group contains nearly 100 amendments, or about three quarters of the total number made in the other place. The very first amendment, which changes a reference to "year" in subsection (1) to "financial year", reflects very well the general nature of the amendments in the group, since they are essentially of a drafting and technical nature and make no changes of substance to the Bill as it left the House. The House may be relieved to hear that I do not intend to describe each amendment in the group individually. They fall into fairly well defined categories, and I am sure that it will be for the convenience of the House if I confine my explanation to those categories.

First, as I have mentioned, there are the amendments concerned with references in part I of the Bill, which includes schedule 1, to the expression "year". At present clause 6(1) provides that "year" is to mean the financial year of a local authority. However, in view of the proposed relocation in clause 26 of the definitions now in clause 6(1)—for which amendment No. 26 paves the way—the appropriate references in part I of the Bill to "year" in relation to a local authority are now being changed to references to "financial year". This is the approach already taken for the other parts of the Bill.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Most of my colleagues have spent many hours on the Bill. As a newcomer, may I ask why it is said more and more that the administration costs of the proposals are enormous and far greater than was first thought by the Government? The definition of "year" creates great difficulties when people are moving from accommodation to accommodation. Do the Government think that the financial difficulties of administration are greater than they first thought?

Mr. Ancram: In Committee, representations were made to us not only by hon. Members but by outside bodies, such as the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, that the complications of administration were compounded by the proposal in the Bill at that time to have a transitional period of three years when there would be two systems running in tandem. Because of the valid concern about the cost and complexity of administering two systems together, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State decided that we should get rid of the transitional period and go for the clean break in 1989. Some of the major concerns put to us by local authorities and others who would have the responsibility of administering the legislation were met by that decision, which was carried through by my right hon. and learned Friend on Report.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): With respect, the Under-Secretary failed to answer the questions put to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell). He answered the question about running two systems. That is perfectly fair, and we accept that. But it does not answer the question that, standing on its own, it is going to be a much more expensive system to administer than the present rating system. Is that or is that not correct?

Mr. Ancram: We have never said for a moment that this was going to be as cheap to collect as the rating system. Nobody could deny that the rating system has the virtue of being simple and easy to collect. Obviously the community charge is going to be more difficult and, therefore, more costly to collect. Although I was not alive at the time, I am informed that the window tax was a very simple and easy tax to collect. However, that was no justification for keeping it, as it really was a tax that nobody could justify. To argue against the introduction of a community charge on the basis that it will cost somewhat more than the rates to collect, rather than to compare the fairness of the present system with the fairness of the community charge, is the Labour party's last faltering attempt at opposition, which it has failed so constructively to do up until now.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Before the Under-Secretary of State leaves that point, will he help the House by telling us, roughly speaking, how much more proportionately it will cost?

Mr. Ancram: This does not arise directly out of the amendments. If the hon. Gentleman cares to look at the debates in Committee he will find that this was discussed on a number of occasions and that estimates—they have only to be estimates—were given. I do not have them to hand, because they do not arise out of these amendments. However, I will make sure that the hon. Gentleman receives the information that was made available in Committee.

The second series of amendments deals with the definition of the term "rates". The main amendment here

[Mr. Ancram]

is No. 77, which provides a general definition of "rates" to mean the non-domestic rate under clause 3 and the non-domestic water and sewerage rates with which schedule 5 to the Bill is concerned. What is intended is that wherever the word "rates" appears in statute, unless the context otherwise requires, it will have this meaning. It will be clear when the context is concerned with local government finance and with rating, and consequently when rate means those three forms of non-domestic local taxation or assessment, as opposed to simply an amount or standard.

The introduction of a general definition of the term "rates" has, in turn, required a number of consequential amendments to other provisions in the Bill. Those are the subject of amendments Nos. 72, 85 to 87, 89, 92, 96 to 102, 105 to 109, 127 to 129 and 131 to 132. I could give hon. Members examples of those amendments if they wish, but I rather gather that the House would wish me to proceed to the third category of amendments.

The third category of amendments in this group continues the theme of refining the Bill's provisions regarding definitions. I have already mentioned amendment No. 26, which paves the way for the amalgamation of clauses 6 and 26 so that the Bill will contain only one clause containing definitions of the terms which it uses. I am sure the House will agree that, in terms of legislation, that is a useful and constructive amendment. The other amendments in the category are Nos. 69, 70,71, 74 to 76, 88, 91, 93, 95 and 103.

The fourth category comprises a series of drafting and consequential amendments relating to what will shortly become the Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987. This covers amendments Nos. 80 and 117 to 124. In general, these amendments parallel the provisions for the recovery of rates in section 247 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1947, as replaced by paragraph 1 of schedule 4 to what will become the Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987.

The new clause contained in amendment No. 80 makes amendments to relevant parts of the Debtors (Scotland) Bill itself. The general effect of these amendments is to ensure that procedures and definitions relating to the recovery of community charges parallel those in the Debtors (Scotland) Bill for the recovery of rates. The amendments raise no new issues of principle and seek simply to apply to the community charge system the reformed system of diligences in the Debtors (Scotland) Bill 1987.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): When the Minister explains it like that and in this environment it sounds very clinical and reasonable. Can he explain exactly what it means? What will it mean in circumstances where someone has not paid and the sheriff officer comes to his house and kicks him out on to the street with all his furniture? What will it mean for ordinary people who are caught in that sort of net? Will the Minister spell it out instead of reading the civil servant's description? Will he put it in graphic words, more human terms, so that an ordinary person can understand?

Mr. Ancram: It is nice to see the hon. Gentleman at this debate. Had he been to some of the other debates we have had on the Bill, he would have had the answer to his question in full and in detail. Indeed, had he attended—I suspect from his question he did not—the proceedings in the House on the Debtors (Scotland) Bill 1987, he would be well aware of the new provisions and systems of diligence that are being introduced. Many of them are being introduced as a result of the Scottish Law Commission's report, which I seem to remember the hon. Gentleman has supported in the past and called for the Government to put into legislation.

I am sure that the fact that we are now making sure that the forms of diligence that are operable under this Bill match those within the Debtors (Scotland) Bill on the matter of rates is something that the hon. Gentleman will welcome. I am convinced that, given his history on this matter, had we not done that he would have been the first to criticise us. As I said, I welcome the fact that he is here and I am sure that he will be able to read the lengthy debates we have had on this matter in the past. However, I am sure he would not wish to bore his hon. Friends by a repetition of those debates.

The last category of amendments in this group comprises a series of drafting and technical amendments. One example would be amendment No. 73, to clause 26, which makes an adjustment to the definition of part residential subjects. At present, the definition opens with the phrase

> "lands and heritages which are occupied partly as the sole or main residence of any person".

The amendment would substitute the word "used" for "occupied". The difference is perhaps a small one, but the term "used" creates greater consistency of terminology within the Bill.

Again, amendments Nos. 34 to 36 and 43 to 45 clarify the circumstances in which long-term tenants may be liable for the standard or collective community charge. At present, tenants may be liable if the premises

> "have been let for a continuous period of 12 months or more".

That could be taken to imply that a lease would have had to run for 12 months before any question of a tenant's liability arose. As hon. Members will recall, that is not our intention, and the amendments simplify the provision to make the tenant liable when premises

> "are let for a period of 12 months or more"—

that is, when a lease for 12 months or more exists, the tenant is liable.

None of the amendments in this group has any significant policy content. Taken together, however, they do represent a significant improvement to the Bill, particularly as regards its organisation. In many cases they arise from criticisms or comments that have been made, either here or in the other place. They leave the Bill very much clearer and sharper. As I said at the beginning, they are largely technical. That is why, with respect to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes), I did not go into a great deal of detail about the individual provisions within the amendments. I am glad to commend them to the House.

Mr. Maxton: I accept that these are largely technical amendents, some of which we asked for, some of which were asked for elsewhere and some of which were asked for by our technical experts outside. They do improve the Bill. However, one would have thought that when the Government were changing definitions in the Bill and making them more precise and exact they might have introduced an amendment, now that it is accepted, to take out the term "community charge" and put in the term "poll tax". After all, as that is what the Prime Minister now clearly calls it, why should we not call it the same? It is what the author called it when he originally wrote his articles. The Government do not do that because in previous White Papers they have rejected it.

Mr. Foulkes: Is my hon. Friend aware that it is not just the Prime Minister who calls it a poll tax? Yesterday the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs also referred to it as a poll tax.

Mr. Maxton: I accept that. My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) has referred to that point.

The Minister studied history, as I did, and I believe that it was at the same university. It has always been my view that the window tax was nearer to the poll tax because ot was difficult to collect and easy to evade and was given up simply for that reason.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) has made the valid point that this amendment should be made. These are not community charges because they are not spread across the community in any sort of equity. They are the introduction of a poll tax. There is no way in which that can be denied by the Government. Even the Prime Minister in her last moment of remorse has put the proper title to this charge.

It is quite clear that the Conservative party in Scotland, or what is left of it—they are now all members of that rather selective and dying species, a small group called the league of lemmings—will not be in the next Parliament to answer the recriminations from the people about these issues. It is quite improper that this enormously radical change in the raising of local revenue should be introduced in the inappropriate terminology of a community charge when it is nothing of the sort. The word "community" suggests a sort of fairness in the measure; but, of course, there is no fairness in a measure that introduces a retrogressive tax, a poll tax, which no other Parliament in Europe—indeed, in the civilised world—has dreamt of introducing. It is a measure of the reactionary nature of modern Toryism—not the old Toryism of Disraeli, with his one nation — under the present Prime Minister, about which numberless Conservative Members are extremely unhappy but have not got the guts or the gumption to attack. It is quite unacceptable that these very radical changes should be introduced in a House as empty as this one is when the implications for England——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will recognise that we are dealing with Lords amendments of a very narrow sort. I hope that he will address himself to the Lords amendments.

Mr. Faulds: I have ranged a little broader because the implications of this legislation will, in the unfortunate eventuality that the Conservatives get back, be applied to England and Wales. I am the only Member in the House this afternoon representing an English constituency. The fact that I happen to be a Scot is one of those fortunate accidents of fate, because most English constituencies do rather better in their representation if they are represented by a Scot rather than by the half-educated English.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): Tell that to your constituents.

Mr. Faulds: They are well aware of that and they return me with unfailing regularity, as I have no doubt they will at the next general election.

I simply want to make the point that on the question of the amendments, to use the phrase "community charge" is misleading not only to the House but to the wider electorate outside. It should be rephrased to use the exact description, which is "poll tax". I hope that during the election campaign the point will be made about the implications of a poll tax for every individual in Britain —not just in Scotland, but in England and Wales. It will be massive in terms of the effect on the charges they are going to have to pay to raise local revenue.

It would have been more responsible of a more responsible Government—which, of course, we do not have — had these measures been examined in great detail. Every single aspect of the raising of local revenue should have been examined to see how a more equitable system than the rating system could and should have been introduced.

With that, Sir, because I see your eye looking somewhat averse at me, I shall end my comments on this amendment in the hope that we will have another chance to raise these massively fundamental issues of how local revenue should be raised.

Mr. Ancram: It would be less than kind if I did not respond to the first English intervention on the Bill.

Mr. Faulds: Scottish on the part of the English.

Mr. Ancram: Whether it is Scottish on the part of the English——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I understand that the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) was, in fact, born in Tanganyika.

Mr. Faulds: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you make my argument for me. Not only do the Scots have to represent English interests, but the Scots also have to show the rest of the world how to conduct their lives to a better purpose. The fact that my father was a Scottish missionary only underlines the importance of the point that I am making.

5.30 pm

Mr. Ancram: I am interested to learn the origins of the species of the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds). I have a close link with the hon. Gentleman, because he was once at school in my constituency and I am sure that that is where he managed to adopt the accent with which he entertained the House.

I was interested to hear the hon. Member for Warley, East mention the word "equity". I understand that the hon. Gentleman is an expert on that subject. The hon. Gentleman raised the serious question why there is not an amendment about the words "poll tax". He wanted to know what was fair about a flat rate. I remind the hon. Gentleman that in many walks of life there are flat rates. We pay a flat-rate television licence. We pay the same rate of excise duty on the petrol and drink that we buy and, if we happen to smoke still, on the tobacco that we smoke.

Mr. Rifkind: And on VAT.

Mr. Ancram: Indeed, as my right hon. and learned Friend reminds me, on VAT. There are many examples of flat rates. We should look for the ability to pay not within the context of the community charge, but within the context of the largest proportion of local government expenditure and from where that is financed, namely, the central taxpayer where the ability to pay is underwritten throughout.

[Mr. Ancram]

The hon. Member for Warley, East said that after the election, whether my right hon. and hon. Friends constitute the Government, there will be recriminations against the imposition of the charge. He echoed the point made earlier by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) that Scotland would be lumbered with the community charge. I am delighted to hear Opposition Members say that. That shows that, in their heart of hearts, they believe that the Conservatives will win the general election.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 14 agreed to. [One with Special Entry.]

Clause 5

STATUTORY AND OTHER REFERENCES TO RATEABLE VALUES ETC.

Lords amendment: No. 15, in page 4, line 46, leave out from "the" to "value" in line 47 and insert

"assessed rental or, as the case may be the gross annual, net annual or rateable"

Mr. Ancram: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 16 to 25.

Mr. Ancram: This group of amendments to clause 5 are also technical. The most significant are numbers 15 to 19, which introduce into subsections (1) and (2) the concept of "assessed rental". This term has not had any relevance to valuation for rating purposes since the Valuation and Rating (Scotland) Act 1956, but it still appears in a number of deeds of condition for tenement properties, particularly in the west of Scotland. It was accordingly suggested by the Property Owners and Factors Association of Scotland, and by the Law Society of Scotland, that the absence of any translation of the term "assessed rental" in clause 5 might create practical difficulties, and it seems sensible that the Bill should seek to avoid this possibility. The amendments also have the effect of clarifying the meaning of "assessed rental" by equating it to "net annual value" in all cases.

The purpose of amendments 20 to 23 is to ensure that, for the purposes of subsection (3) of clause 5, references in enactments to gross annual value, net annual value or rateable value take proper account of material changes of circumstances affecting the value of the property concerned. Amendment No. 24 is also of a technical nature. Subsections (1), (2) and (3) of the clause refer specifically to the appearance of net annual values in the valuation roll. Although valuation rolls must have a column for net annual value, assessors do not have to put a figure in that column if net annual value is the same as rateable value—as it is in most cases—so there would be difficulty in operating clause 5 where the net annual value column has been left blank. The amendment would require that in such cases, references in the clause to the appearance in the roll of net annual value should be taken as references to the appearance of rateable value.

Mr. Foulkes: Put a bit of emotion into it.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) may find this point very complicated, as indeed it is for the uninitiated in the law. However, it is of great importance to those who operate the law, and I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will accept that these are useful amendments.

The final amendment in this group, Lords amendment No. 25, defines the terms "gross annual value", "net annual value" and "rateable value" for the purposes of clause 5 only. Given the purposes of clause 5, it is clearly necessary that the values be calculated on the basis of the law in force immediately before the domestic valuation and rating systems are abolished, and I am pleased to say that the amendment achieves this. As I have explained, the amendments in this group are largely technical. They make a number of useful improvements to the clause, and I commend them to the House.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): Very briefly, I want to inquire why the amendments were introduced in another place so late in the consideration of the Bill. If they are as important as the Minister has suggested, did they not occur to the Minister prior to the introduction of the Bill? If not, is that not evidence of what the alliance has been saying all along—that the Bill was ill considered and rushed in judgment?

Mr. Ancram: If the hon. Gentleman had listened to me, he would have found that these are detailed points of law. The term "assessed rental" has not had any relevance to valuation for rating purposes since the Valuation and Rating (Scotland) Act 1956. We are therefore very grateful to the practitioners who are concerned about such matters — for example, the Property Owners and Factors Association of Scotland and the Law Society of Scotland. Those two bodies drew these points to our attention. I should have thought that the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) would welcome the fact that we have taken those representations on board.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 16 to 27 agreed to.

Clause 8

LIABILITY FOR PERSONAL COMMUNITY CHARGE

Lords amendment: No. 28, in page 7, line 25, at end insert—

"( ) A person undertaking a full-time course of education shall, in respect of the period beginning when he undertakes the course and ending when he ceases to do so, be liable for only such percentage as may be prescribed of the amount of the personal community charge for which he would otherwise be liable.".

Read a Second time.

Mr. Maxton: I beg to move, as an amendment to the Lords amendment——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) is not a signatory to amendment *(g)*, and he therefore cannot move it. None of the signatories is present. With Lords amendment No. 28, it will be convenient to consider Lords amendment No. 32.

Mr. Ancram: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Amendment No 28 responds to concern expressed in another place about the position of students. It was argued that liability to pay the full charge could act as a marginal, but possibly significant, deterrent to overseas students thinking of coming to Scottish universities. There was also the question whether home students should be liable to pay the community charge. Some noble Lords argued for complete exemption, others for 100 per cent. reimbursement through the grant mechanism. The view was forcefully expressed that to make students liable and increase their grants to enable them to pay the charge involved needless additional administration and that our original proposal, which I explained in Committee and on Report, for a flat incrase in grants based on the Scottish average, could lead to some unfairness.

In light of the arguments advanced in another place, which were reflected in amendment (*a*) to the Lords amendment, which was not moved, we cannot accept that students should be totally exempt. We remain clearly of the view that, like other adults, students must make some contribution towards the cost of local services which they use and, consistent with the fundamental principle of accountability that underlies the introduction of the community charge, they must have some financial interest in the cost implications of the policies they can vote for.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): Will students get an increase in grant to cover the cost?

Mr. Ancram: If the hon. Gentleman had followed the arguments earlier——

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): The hon. Gentleman should not be so patronising.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman from his partician loftiness is shouting from a sedentary position; he would do well to listen to the changes that were made in another place.

An Hon. Member: Just answer the question.

Mr. Ancram: I shall certainly answer the question put by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes), if his hon. Friends will allow me to do so.

At a previous stage, we had proposed that a supplement to the grant would be given to all who were eligible for grant to help them pay the largest proportion of the community charge. At that time, I made it clear that we would probably wish to supplement the grant, for those eligible for grant, by an amount of up to probably 80 per cent., which would match the general level of rebates for others on low incomes under the proposals in the Bill.

As I was saying, an argument was put forward in another place that this could be unfair to some who would be paying the charge, because the supplement would reflect the average of the community charges for Scotland and not necessarily the community charge in each area; it was also argued that there might be unfairness because some students, such as foreign students, would not get any supplement. For that reason, we moved away from the proposal to supplement the grant to the proposals in the amendment we are considering.

Mr. Faulds: The hon. Gentleman made what appeared to be an adverse comment about my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) in referring to his patrician background. That seemed to come somewhat oddly from his mouth in view of his genetic inheritance, and the more so because of his Parliamentary Private Secretary who is even more patrician than he is. Having shared an office with my excellent colleague my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian, may I assure the Under-Secretary that he is much less a patrician? In fairness to his electoral chances, may I point out that he is much more plebeian than I am?

Mr. Ancram: I cannot comment on the last point, but I can on the earlier ones, because the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) and I went to school together; we were at the same public school and I have known the hon. Gentleman for a long time. Not for that reason only but because he lives in the same part of the Scottish borders as I do, I must point out that on the last reckoning he owns rather more land in the Scottish borders than I do. It was with certain experience that I used the phrase advisedly. I may say also that my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton) is not my Parliamentary Private Secretary, but the PPS of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State.

Mr. Robert Hughes: It is the old boys' network. As a commoner, if I may intervene in the aristocratic argument, am I right in believing that students in Scotland will pay 20 per cent. of the poll charge and that they will get no increase in student grant to cover that 20 per cent.? Many students in Aberdeen will be affected; indeed, the city of Aberdeen itself will be affected by the charges.

Mr. Ancram: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for bringing me back to the part of my remarks which I have been trying to complete for some time. If I may explain what the amendment will do, the hon. Gentleman will get the answer to his question.

Amendment No. 28 responds positively to many of the points of criticism made in another place. The purpose of the amendment is to provide that students should pay only a reduced charge. We envisage that the amount payable will be equivalent to the amount which would be paid by an individual receiving the maximum rebate. It is important that there should be fairness between those two. If the hon. Gentleman checks, I believe that he will find that the students themselves recognise that point.

As the House will recall, the illustrative assumptions we have made about the rebate scheme involve a maximum rebate of 80 per cent., so that everyone is called upon to pay a minimum contribution of 20 per cent. as the personal community charge. On the same basis, therefore, we would envisage prescribing that students should pay 20 per cent. of the charge. As I say, it is to keep equity between the two systems.

The original proposal was to supplement the grant to help students pay roughly the same proportion of community charge as somebody on a full rebate. We have removed the idea of supplementing grant and have effectively created an exemption of up to 80 per cent. So the answer to the hon. Gentleman's question is that we decided to go down the route not of supplementing grant but of exempting students from a proportion of the charge. We believe that the system we are proposing, which the students themselves prefer to the system originally proposed, will meet some of the criticisms.

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudon) *rose*——

5.45 pm

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman must allow me to develop my points about the amendment.

[Mr. Ancram]

The new approach envisaged in the amendment has a number of important advantages. First, for home students, it means that their financial outgoings will be substantially reduced. This will be helpful to them in budgeting, particularly during the vacation period when they will not normally have any direct income from grant. That was a weakness, perhaps, of the previous proposals.

Secondly, it means that the amount payable by each student will not depend on the difference between the charge in his area and the Scottish average, but will simply be a set proportion of the charge in that area. Again, that was a criticism levelled at the original proposals.

Thirdly, there will be important administrative simplifications. I acknowledge that our earlier proposals involving a non-means-tested addition to grant, would have involved some extra administrative burden on the Scottish Education Department and local education authorities in England and Wales administering the awards scheme for students coming to Scotland. The new approach will achieve the required result very simply.

Finally, the amendment will substantially improve the position of overseas students. It would have been difficult, if not imposible, to offer them compensation through the student awards system as was proposed for home students eligible for awards, but the amendment will mean that the amounts they are called upon to pay will be substantially reduced. The Government's new approach in this respect substantially meets the concerns which were expressed about the position of overseas students.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): I congratulate my hon. Friend on the scheme which he has just outlined. Will he confirm that at universities such as St. Andrews, which is normally residential, a great many students will be much better off under the community charge system than under the rating system because many who live in private accommodation outside university residences pay rates for which they get no assistance?

Mr. Ancram: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for making that point. I know this from experience in my constituency. Students who live in accommodation where rates are payable contribute to the rates wholly or in part, depending on where they live. At the same time some students, because of parental contributions, do not receive any support through awards. Hon. Members know only too well that the hardest pressed students are those who get no award because of parental contributions but actually get no parental contribution; they have to pay full rates for their accommodation, without any assistance. So I agree with my hon. Friend that the improvements made in another place answer not only some of the criticisms but the real problems that exist under the present rating-system.

Mr. Foulkes *rose*——

Mr. Ancram: If I give way to the hon. Gentleman, I hope he will tell me how, under his Government, or under his prospective Government's policies which he is putting forward at the election, he would seek to help students who at the moment have to pay rates without any assistance.

Mr. Foulkes: I am glad that the Minister has conceded that we will win the election. I will leave it to my hon. Friends to explain what the Labour Government will do. I hope the Minister will not chide me for not knowing the answer to the question, but I have not been involved in the previous consideration of the Bill; as he knows only too well, I have been involved in other parliamentary business elsewhere.

Yesterday, I visited Ballochmyle hospital in my constituency and was approached by representatives of the student nurses there. They were concerned that they were not getting an increase—or rather the proposed increase for those in the nursing profession—and were worried because, as I understand it, they will not be treated like other students, and in the way that the Minister has just described. Therefore, can the Minister tell the House the rationale and reason why student nurses are not treated in the same way as other students in relation to the poll tax?

Mr. Ancram: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for asking that question. The simple answer is that student nurses and others, such as apprentices and those on youth training schemes, are in a fundamentally different position from students. All those individuals either have earnings or are in receipt of allowances, and have access, if necessary, to the rebate scheme that is proposed in the legislation. However, students will not have access to that rebate scheme if they fall within the definition of "students" that is triggered by this amendment. It is because there is a different way of dealing with those groups that they do not fall within this amendment.

Mr. Foulkes: Is the Minister saying that student nurses could end up paying more than 20 per cent., or more than the lowest rebated level? Does that apply to those student nurses who receive substantially less, in real terms, than some students who will have their poll tax reduced to 20 per cent.?

Mr. Ancram: For those who do not fall within the category of student, that depends on the income of the individual. I am not making any accusations, but I do not think that the hon. Gentleman was present when we discussed the rebate scheme and illustrated the income support levels that are likely to exist. However, we may deal with that when discussing other amendments later today.

The entire principle of the Bill is to ensure that through a rebate scheme, those on low incomes will receive support. The principle behind that remains that each person should contribute something. Students fell out of that category because, quite rightly, they are dealt with less and less through the social welfare system, and more and more through educational provisions, and in other ways. For that reason, it was felt that students should be treated in a different way.

It was for that reason that we originally sought to supplement student grants. However, given the complications that were advanced about those proposals, we are now proposing a much simpler system which, I believe, is generally welcomed by universities and student bodies because it is regarded as an improvement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth (Stirling): It is hardly surprising that students welcome this provision because many currently pay rates, which Opposition Members wish to continue. However, what is the position for students living in halls of residence? At present, the University Grants Committee pays a substantial sum to Scottish universities for the domestic rates arising from their students. Under these proposals, are we to take it that, because students will no longer pay rates and because the halls of residence will no longer be rated for domestic rates, there will be a windfall gain for the Scottish universities insofar as the UGC makes those grants to those Scottish universities?

Mr. Ancram: My hon. Friend is moving away from the territory for which I have responsibility — the administration of the community charge — into the financing of higher education. Although I may have views on that, I have no responsibility for it as a Minister. However, I have noted my hon. Friend's comments and I am sure that those who have that responsibility will also have noted his points.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): I am sure that the Minister has received some advice about central institutions, such as halls of residence, on a par with the comments made by his hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). Surely the Minister has some views on this matter?

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman is right. Of course I have views on this. However, it is not for me to speak on this subject from the Dispatch Box. University finance does not fall——

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West) *rose*——

Mr. Ancram: If the hon. Gentleman will allow me to continue. University finance does not fall within my area of responsibility, either in terms of universities or of higher education generally. My hon. Friend the member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. MacKay) is the Minister responsible for that.

Mr. Ernie Ross: We are talking about legislation that is not yet enacted. Therefore, we are discussing the possibilities of seeking to amend and improve it. However, other amendments to other legislation are running parallel with this.

The Minister's right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science who is responsible for universities, is introducing an entirely new body which will have a Scottish component. The Secretary of State for Scotland will have a responsibility to give advice to that new funding body from the Scottish perspective. Therefore, it is important that the Minister should address this aspect now, because clearly the Secretary of State for Education and Science will consider this debate and read the comments made by the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). If he listens to him, without any guidance from the Minister at the Dispatch Box, he may well adopt the rather meagre and miserly attitude taken by the hon. Member for Stirling and deny the universities the funds they desperately need.

It is important that the Minister realises that he has a say, because under the new funding proposals for universities, the Secretary of State for Scotland will have a responsibility to give guidance on the position of the Scottish universities.

Mr. Ancram: Hon. Members must appreciate that the question of funding and of what happens to the university resources that currently come from the UGC—which at the moment meet the rates on student accommodation —is a matter of university or higher education finance. Obviously, it must be considered but it is not a matter on which, from the Dispatch Box, I shall either give a projection or make a policy statement.

Quite rightly, because that is the purpose of the amendment, I am dealing with the position of students — *[Interruption.]* Does the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West wish to intervene? He is a great mutterer from a seated position.

Mr. Douglas: I do not want to prolong this agony for the Minister, but the Scottish Office Minister responsible for education is sitting along the Bench from him. The hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. MacKay) has the responsibility, in the Scottish Office, for central institutions, including colleges of education which have halls of residence and which would receive "windfalls" on the lines that the Minister has mentioned. What is the view of the Scottish Office about those "windfalls"? Surely to goodness it has a view on that.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman is talking about a situation that will not arise for another two years. It absolutely fascinates me to hear Opposition Members say that we should be taking a distinct and definitive view on university financing two years hence——

Mr. Douglas: I am not talking about university finance.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman says that he is not talking about university finance. However, the purpose of the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling was to talk about university financing. What fascinates me about this argument is that Opposition Members suggest that, if universities were to benefit from some sort of windfall, it should be taken from them. I am sure that the universities will note the remarks made by Opposition Members.

To sum up, this Government amendment represents a clear and positive response to the concern that has been expressed about students. It rightly maintains the principle that students should be liable for the community charge, like other adults who use local services and influence them through their votes. The amendment achieves the result that the Government have intended all along, that students should be in broadly the same position as those in receipt of the maximum rebate — by a mechanism which, I must admit, is much simpler than that which we had originally envisaged. The amendment greatly improves the position of overseas students and also that of others who would not have been eligible for assistance through grants. It removes many of the areas of concern that had arisen. Therefore, I commend the amendment to the House.

Amendment No. 32 provides that students who are resident in premises subject to the collective community charge should not as a result be exempt from the personal community charge. They will thus be subject to individual registration and will be liable to pay the reduced amount of charge provided under amendment No. 28. They will not be liable to make collective community charge contributions to the landlord of the collective charge premises. Some anxiety was expressed in this area and I believe that the amendment has also been broadly welcomed. I commend it to the House.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must tell the House that both amendments Nos. 28 and 32 involve privilege.

6 pm

Mr. Maxton: I shall be brief, as I am aware that many hon. Members wish to speak on the slightly more important issue of the disabled and the poor, who should be exempt from this disastrous tax.

I wish to make three points. First, we welcome the change, while recognising its limitations. For the vast majority of students at Scottish universities, colleges and other educational institutions there will be no financial change whatever. The Government made it clear that they would put a certain amount on the grant, and the amendment merely gives a legal definition to it and a basis for it which was not otherwise the case. I welcome the change for that reason. It also helps foreign students and students who are out of receipt of grant, perhaps in a fourth year, or repeating a year for which they have no grant, and I welcome it for that reason also.

Secondly, on several occasions the Minister mentioned the figure of 20 per cent., but there is nothing in the amendment or the Bill to say that. The figure shall be "prescribed", so it is not even necessarily the same amount as for security benefit.

Mr. Ancram: It will be.

Mr. Maxton: This was the opportunity that the Minister had for inserting 20 per cent. clearly and unequivocally in the Bill. The Minister keeps saying 20 per cent., but I am reliably informed that the Department of the Environment does not wish to have 20 per cent. written into the Bill, because, if by some mischance it has the opportunity, it wishes to have a much higher minimum payment than 20 per cent. Therefore, the Department ensured that no minimum percentage was written into the Bill.

Thirdly, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) said that there would be a windfall for universities and colleges from this provision. What about the local authorities? It is not clear how the sums that local authorities will lose in rates on university buildings and reduced poll tax for students will be made up. In north-east Fife, St. Andrew's university is a major contributor to the rating system. Who will pay the difference there? Will the Government make supplementary grants to local authorities to take account of their loss? There are about 30,000 full-time students in Glasgow. If they were not students, they would either pay the full amount, or part of it would be paid by the Government and they would make a minimum payment. The amendment does not make it clear who will pay the supplement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman cannot have the argument both ways. He cannot argue both that students will be worse off and that local government will be worse off. Either students will pay more, or they will pay less. If they pay more the local authority will be better off, and if they pay less the local authority will be worse off. He seems to be pursuing two parallel arguments which are mutually exclusive.

Mr. Maxton: My arguments are not mutually exclusive. It is typical of the hon. Gentleman's rather small brain that he fails to grasp the point. The Government's original proposals were that most students would be paid up to 80 per cent. extra on their grant in order to pay the full poll tax to their local authority. The local authority was to receive the full sum and the students were to pay 20 per cent. of it. Under these proposals, it is clear that students will pay 20 per cent., but it is not clear how the Government will pay the 80 per cent. which they were originally to pay through additional grant to the local authority. Does the hon. Gentleman understand that now?

Mr. Michael Forsyth *indicated assent.*

Mr. Maxton: Good. I am glad about that.

I hope that the Minister will respond briefly to my three points.

Mr. Maclennan: I had hoped that the Minister would take the opportunity to explain to the Scottish public who will be affected by this changed provision in respect of liability for the personal community charge.

Clause 8 does not define those who are in full-time courses of education, which is why the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) referred to student nurses. Nor is it clear whether other people who are in full-time courses of education, such as those on youth training schemes, might conceivably be affected by the change. When the Minister replies to the debate he may wish to make the ambit of this change clearer than hitherto.

It is clear from what the Minister said that students, however wide that category may be defined subsequently, will not be better off as a result of the change if what he said about offsetting the burden of the community charge through an adjustment in grants is the case. What has been portrayed as a concession seems to have been made solely with foreign students coming to Scottish universities in mind and with no intention to alleviate the burden on Scottish students.

In a parliamentatry answer to a question that I tabled about the incidence of the poll tax in different authority areas the Minister drew attention to the wide differences in the level of the poll tax that will exist to replace domestic rates at 1985-86 levels. In Strathclyde, for example, the community charge will be £229, whereas in Grampian, where Aberdeen university is located, it will be £157. Does the Minister expect students to take that factor into account when deciding which university to attend?

It is astonishing that foreign students should have to pay this impost. I attended university in New York, and no one there suggested that I should be made to pay a poll tax. Such reciprocity seems to be the least that a civilised country, such as Scotland, should offer visiting foreign students. Furthermore, I wonder whether what is proposed conforms to European Community policy. I wonder how many other EC countries levy poll taxes on our students who study abroad, as I expect they will do increasingly. Is the Minister suggesting that our Scottish students would do better, financially, to study abroad?

Mr. Henderson: Can the hon. Gentleman give me a good sound reason why overseas students, who are frequently well off, should not pay a contribution to local government services, of which they are beneficiaries like everyone else? In the United States, where the hon. Gentleman had the benefit of being a student, he would have paid state and local taxes if they had arisen as sales taxes or in any other form.

Mr. Maclennan: The state of New York, where I had the good fortune to study, had a sensible system of local income tax, which I commend to the hon. Member for

Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson). There was never any suggestion that it should be paid for by students, and nor would there be under an alliance Government.

There are many students who are living pretty close to the bread line who have to eke out their all too exiguous grant by working during the vacations. This poll tax will be an additional charge which, no doubt, will influence the thinking of some of them as to whether it is appropriate to spin out their higher education, as they should do: whether, as the poll tax rises to take account of increases in the cost of running local government and providing services which are necessary and which Parliament has entrusted to it, they can afford to continue in full-time education. The inhibitions on going into higher education in this country under a Conservative Government are great enough, in all conscience, and it is astonishing that the Government are seeking to increase the burden.

Mr. Henderson: I shall be very brief. I want to point out that the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) did not give a single reason why he felt that overseas students should be exempt from paying the community charge. That is the only point that I wish to make at this stage.

Mr. Hugh Brown: I should like to ask the Minister a couple of questions. It seems to me that the amendment is no concession, although for administrative reasons it is tidier and better. I suspect that the bulk of Scottish students will continue to be out of pocket to the same extent as they were under the previous arrangements, based on the 80-20 per cent. proposals. I am not trying to be clever, as the Minister knows. If he says that there will be a loss of revenue to local authorities, has he made any estimate of the loss to each affected authority? Does this mean that some compensation will have to be built into the formula for the revenue support grant for that loss of revenue?

Mr. Ernie Ross: There are approximately 7,000 full-time students in Dundee attending a college of education, a college of technology, university or a college of art. Can the Minister tell those 7,000 students that under his legislation they will not pay more than they pay at present? That is a simple question. How does the hon. Gentleman respond to the 970 student nurses in Dundee who will have to pay more, bearing in mind the miserable rise that was given to them by the Government a few weeks ago? What will he say to them?

6.15 pm

Mr. David Lambie (Cunninghame, South): I should like to take up the point that was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Provan (Mr. Brown). This amendment is not a concession. The majority of students in my constituency in Ayrshire will be paying 20 per cent. of the poll tax when the Bill becomes an Act of Parliament. At present, they pay nothing.

Recently, I visited the two major further education colleges in my area — Ayr technical college and Kilmarnock technical college. The students at those colleges were incensed that the value of their grant had been reduced by 19 per cent. since 1979 and that now they are to be hit by this poll tax charge.

The Minister said that there will be a rebate up to 80 per cent. of the poll tax. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton), I do not accept that that is the figure on which the Government will finally settle; otherwise no Government who have made up their mind on the rebate would subject themselves to the justifiable criticism that they are getting now. If the Government have fixed the rebate at 80 per cent., why do they not put it in the Bill? I am always suspicious of any Government, irrespective of party and despite what they say in the House or in Committee. At the end of the day it is what is in the legislation that applies. If the figure of 80 per cent. is not in the legislation when it leaves this House, I believe that, after the general election, the Government will take the opportunity to do what the Secretary of State for the Environment wants. Instead of the rebated element being up to 80 per cent. there will be a rebated element of up to 20 per cent. so that everyone, irrespective of their background, will be forced to pay 80 per cent. of the tax.

If the Minister is honest and sincere about this change, he should state clearly that none of the students at either Ayr technical college or Kilmarnock technical college, who currently are not paying rates, will pay either 20 per cent. or 80 per cent. of the poll tax. If he does that, I might vote for him. If not, I shall vote against him.

Mr. Foulkes: The more I sit through these discussions, the more concerned I become about the implications of the poll tax for students, student nurses and other young people, but we are particularly dealing with students tonight.

During Education and Science Question Time a few weeks ago the Minister of State, when dealing with universities, admitted under questioning from myself and others that the student grant is not enough to cover all the costs that students must pay. When I asked how he expected students from poor families to be able to make ends meet, he said that they should find a job in their spare time. In an area such as mine, where there is 28 per cent. unemployment, that is quite impossible. It is wrong to suggest that people should moonlight in order to get themselves through college. This poll tax will add to their burden, as my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) knows only too well. As my hon. Friend from Cunninghame, South (Mr. Lambie) said, where will students get this extra 20 per cent.? It is impossible for the ordinary poor family in a council house in my constituency who are already facing this additional poll tax to find this extra 20 per cent., so it will be much more difficult for the students who are struggling to get through college.

The hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), who annoys me almost to the point of hatred, is the architect of this vicious little measure and the father of this bastard, because that is what this poll tax is. He is one of the people who will benefit from it. He is one of the people who will be better off, as will the Minister and many others.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: And the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes).

Mr. Foulkes: Exactly. The only difference between Conservative Members and myself is that I am against this measure because I do not think that I should be better off. I can afford to pay my property tax. Conservative Members are voting for their own windfall. We are voting against getting it because we can afford to pay; but there are people who will have to pay more who cannot afford it.

[Mr. Foulkes]

The hon. Member for Stirling, that vicious little Member, the architect of this measure——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. the hon. Gentleman does not help debate by using such extravagant language.

Mr. Foulkes: Even if it is true? The hon. Member for Stirling talks about a windfall to universities. He knows damn fine that the Treasury will make sure that the universities never see any of that windfall.

The only people who will get windfalls out of this provision are, as usual under a Tory Government, the rich. In my constituency, people such as the Marquess of Ailsa, the Marquess of Bute and the Duke of Wellington are likely to benefit. Fortunately, none of them has a vote. They will benefit, but the poor in the council houses, the people I represent, and their sons and daughters, who are desperately trying to get through university to better themselves, will suffer. Those are the people who will make sure that the Tories are not re-elected and that this provision is not enacted.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) is a past master of black propaganda and we have heard it all again tonight. His remarks do not deserve a reply.

I am aware that the hon. Member for Cunninghame, South (Mr. Lambie) likes to rely on reliable sources for his information. However, what the hon. Gentleman had to say about the 20 per cent.——

Mr. Lambie: That is why I go to the colleges.

Mr. Ancram: That may well be, but with regard to what he had to say about the 20 per cent. and 80 per cent., I do not believe that his hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) is a reliable source. I do not know from what reliable source the hon. Member for Cathcart received his information, but I believe that he should go out and find another source.

Right from the start of the debates we have had on the rebate scheme I have made it clear that the likely figure —I have used that word over and over again—was a 20 per cent. minimum requirement.

Mr. Lambie: Put that figure in the Bill.

Mr. Ancram: I have explained on many occasions, but I am prepared to do so again, that the reason why that figure is not in the legislation is that we are basing the rebate scheme on the housing benefit scheme that will be introduced in April next year. We believe that it does not make sense to have two different schemes—that would cause all sorts of confusion in the constituency of the hon. Member for Cunninghame, South — but to have two schemes that are, as far as possible, the same as each other.

In all the illustrations that have been created in draft, the figure for the housing benefit regulation has been set at 20 per cent. It is likely to be 20 per cent., but we have to await those regulations to discover that figure. It is for that reason that the legislation we are discussing does not contain the figure of 20 per cent. I suspect that if that 20 per cent. figure had been included, Opposition Members, who find an argument against anything, would have said that that was like writing the figure into tablets of stone. No doubt they would have argued that such a percentage figure should be left to statutory instruments or regulations so that it could be altered in the light of changing circumstances. I believe that the hon. Member for Cunninghame, South is doing himself a disservice by relying too much on his hon. Friend the Member for Cathcart. I believe that he has been misled.

The hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) asked whether students will be better off. I must say that those students who pay nothing at the moment towards local government, although they receive the benefit of local government services, will obviously have to pay for the first time. By definition they will not be better off. I believe that there are strong arguments for claiming that those who benefit from services should be prepared to contribute to them. I see no reason for saying that those who are not students, but possibly on low incomes, should be prepared to pay 20 per cent., but that students should be exempt. I see no justification for that, and I suspect that the public would agree with me.

My hon. Friend the Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) has said that students who find themselves paying rates with no support may find that they are better off as a result of this legislation. Their financial standing will depend precisely on the contribution that they make to local government and the support that they receive.

Mr. Henderson: At the moment, does not the University Grants Committee pay universities substantial sums, which they then pay in rates to local authorities? That sum amounts to 10 per cent. of the moneys made available by the Government to support the university system. The Opposition talk about cuts in funding for universities, but here is a wonderful way of obtaining more funds for universities by reducing the demands that local authorities make upon them in rates.

Mr. Ancram: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that point, because it is also valid regarding future provisions for non-domestic rates.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) kept on referring to the fact that the poll tax will rise. The only reason why the poll tax will rise— [HON. MEMBERS: "Poll tax!"]—is if high-spending local authorities decide to continue to increase their expenditure. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) also made that prediction. If that is his prediction for Labour authorities in Scotland, it is about time that Scottish ratepayers understood that. We believe that once the community charge is in place — [HON. MEMBERS: "Poll tax."]—I was quoting the words used by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland.

Once the community charge is in place, I believe that many authorities, which at the moment see nothing wrong in increasing expenditure when they know that only a minority of their electorates must pay, will think twice before they impose the type of increases predicted by the Opposition.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan (Mr. Brown) questioned whether the concession that I have announced is a true concession. Obviously, it is a concession for those who, until this amendment was made, were to pay the full community charge — those who are not eligible for grant, foreign students, and so on. I believe that those groups will view the amendment as a concession. It is a further concession that I am sure people in the hon. Gentleman's area will appreciate because the original proposal that we made was that the support given through the grant system would attach to a figure, likely to be 80 per cent. of the average poll—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!".]—the average community charge in Scotland. At that time it was pointed out, quite rightly, that that proposal would impose heavier liabilities on those who live in high-community charge areas as opposed to those who live in low-community charge areas——

Mr. Maclennan: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it possible to ensure that, when recording this debate, *Hansard* makes it clear that, for the first time, the Minister has at last admitted that we are debating a poll tax?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Ancram.

Mr. Ancram: We had a long debate in Committee on the question of poll tax. I am sorry that the hon. Member for Garscadden looks so tired, but it is his hon. Friends and allies who are raising this question. In Committee we discussed the definition of poll tax and agreed that a poll tax was a charge per head. At that stage it was made clear that, in terms of that definition, this community charge could fit the definition of a poll tax. We never made any secret about that. However, it was emphasised in Committee, and I wish to repeat, that the Opposition want to attach the term "poll tax" to this measure not because it is a charge per head, but because it creates a totally dishonest impression that this is a tax on the right to vote. That is the only reason why the Opposition get so excited—I appreciate that it is the end of term—about the question of a poll tax.

If I may return to the question raised by the hon. Member for Provan I believe that the concession that I have announced will be a concession even in the high-community charge areas.

The hon. Member for Cathcart questioned the implications of this measure on local government finance. The requirement that students should pay only 20 per cent. of the personal community charge will mean that the community charge will be less than it would otherwise have been. In that sense it resembles the various rating reliefs that are presently taken into account in the distribution of rate support grant. Similarly, under the proposed future arrangements for revenue support grant it will be possible to take account of the effect of the concession for students. The mechanism must be the subject of consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. However, I believe that the point made by the hon. Member for Cathcart will be met.

With regard to the definition of "students", it is the Government's intention that those paying the reduced community charge should be students undertaking full-time courses of education. The definition will be in line with that applied by the Department of Health and Social Security for the purpose of determining students' access to benefits. The mechanism of the reduced charge applies instead of the possibility of access to rebate.

The arrangements will be specified in regulations after consultation with local authorities and education interests. Within the provisions of this legislation we are making sure that there is protection for students. If they do not fall within the category of students, they will fall in the category within which rebates can be applied where justified.

I believe that this amendment is a good, sound concession. I am surprised that it has received such a dusty response from the Opposition. I believe that those who have always pretended at least to have the interests of students at heart will welcome it, and I ask the House to do so.

Question put and agreed to. [Special Entry.]

Lords amendments Nos. 29 and 30 agreed to. [Special Entry.]

Lords amendment: No. 31, in page 7, line 42, at end insert—

"(aa) persons who are severely mentally handicapped within the meaning of subsection (8) below;".

Read a Second time.

6.30 pm

Mr. Dewar: I beg to move amendment (a) to the Lords amendment, leave out 'severely'

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, we may take the following: Amendment (b) to the Lords amendment, at end insert 'and registered disabled persons'.

Lords amendment: No. 33, in page 7, line 47, at end insert—

"(8) In subsection (7)(aa) above, "persons who are severely mentally handicapped" has the following meaning, that is to say, persons suffering from a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes severe impairment of intelligence and social functioning, or such other meaning as may, in substitution, be prescribed."

Amendment (a) thereto, leave out from 'above' to end and insert—

'(i) All registered disabled people;
(ii) All students in full-time education;

Amendment (b) thereto, leave out 'severely'.

Amendment (c) thereto, leave out 'severe'.

Mr. Dewar: I have no complaint about the amount of time that we took on the earlier matters. They were important. Normally, we would have taken a great deal more time over them. I accuse no one of delaying progress. I merely make the point that the guillotine motion has left us in the uncomfortable position in which there are some important matters concerning definitions in connection with the concession to the handicapped. It is unfortunate that they will be squeezed into a few minutes of debate. I hope that the Minister has a little bit of conscience about that.

The issue is the deep concern that has been expressed to almost every hon. Member—certainly to those on the Opposition side — by constituents and organisations dealing with those who are handicapped or disabled, about the impact of the poll tax on them. Let me make it perfectly clear that we will be invited to agree concessions shortly. I welcome such concessions, however small they are. They are a step in the right direction and they represent continuous pressure by my hon. Friends and my colleagues in another place. I take ten seconds warmly to thank Lord Ross of Marnock, Lord Morton of Shuna, Lord Carmichael of Kelvingrove and their colleagues who put up a splendid, spirited fight in the other place. We have got a concession.

Our concern and the point of the amendments is whether the concession is wide enough and whether, responsibly and sensibly, it could be widened and made even more generous. Very shortly, the exemption from the poll is for some persons who are severely mentally handicapped within the meaning of a definition that appears in the Bill. The definition is:

[Mr. Dewar]

"persons suffering from a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes severe impairment of intelligence and social functioning, or such other meaning as may, in substitution, be prescribed."

The simple effect of the first amendment is to take out the word "severely". That will leave "mentally handicapped" as the criterion. It will leave the definition still referring to a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind, but makes it a little more flexible by making it clear that there must be an impairment of intelligence and social functioning but not necessarily a severe impairment, as the Government are demanding.

There are other amendments on which I shall spend no time at all. We must stick to the essentials. The amendments that take out the word "severe" seem to be reasonable and do something significant and useful. It is not a matter of professional ingratitude from Opposition Benches when I suggest that some widening would be welcomed in almost every quarter of the community. I hope that the Minister will seriously address the problem.

The other amendment to which I draw attention is that which would add an important addition, I admit, but one that I hope the Minister will view sympathetically. It is a separate amendment, so they do not stand or fall together. It is suggested not only that we should try to help those who suffer from a mental handicap, but that we should also try to include those who are registered disabled. I accept that that would greatly increase the scope of the concession, but it seems to be a reasonable request.

If we leave "severe" as a criterion of mental handicap, how many people in Scotland will benefit from the concession? I fear that it will be few indeed. Can the Minister lay to rest the genuine fear that the criterion "state of arrested or incomplete development" means that the concession will apply only to those who have been handicapped from birth by some happening at or before birth? There are those who, through illness or tragedy at a later stage, may have a severe handicap. It has been suggested — I put it no higher — that they may be excluded. We should put that fear to one side if it is unjustified. Will the Minister also say a word or two about who decides? Clearly, all the definitions are subjective. The matter comes at a late stage. It is important. It may be the registration officer. It may ultimately be decided in the courts. It is important to know what the machinery is.

The Minister may say that, after all, to remove "severe" or "severely" will widen the scope and lead to a rather ill-defined concession. All such judgments are subjective. We should leave the person who has to use his judgment subjectively in the public interest, with room for compassion and room to look, in a fairly generous way, at cases that are brought to his attention.

I do not think that I need to labour the point about the concession for the disabled. I am sure that the Minister, in his personal capacity at least, will have some sympathy with the fact that many disabled people do not have an easy financial time. All right, they will get a concession and may have to pay only 20 per cent. of the poll tax, but even that will be something of a burden. I remind the Minister — he is aware of it — that, at the moment, under the rating system there is a concession that is at least of some use to them. They get a rating concession on that part of their house that is adapted for the special needs of the disabled. It seems that for many of them there should be some exemption that takes them out of even the 20 per cent. residue that I suspect may affect many of them.

From my own constituency, I know that the handicapped are hard-pressed. I know that they would appreciate a widening of the concession. I commend the amendments to the Minister. I know that he will want to be helpful, as I hope every hon. Member would. I believe that removing severe criteria from the test that is to be applied by whomever decides who among the mentally handicapped will qualify for the exemption would be a sensible loosening of an over-tight definition. Perhaps it will allow many deserving cases to be included. I hope that the Minister will recognise that there will be widespread disappointment if he is not prepared to look at the disabled and include them in the proposed scheme.

Mr. Ancram: It may be helpful if I set out the Government's position in relation to the amendment passed in another place and that tabled by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). First, in responding to the amendments to the two amendments that we are considering, which exempt the severely handicapped from the personal community charge, I should make clear the Government's basic approach to exemptions from personal community charge liability.

To be effective in creating accountability, the personal community charge must, as far as possible, be payable by the whole adult population. In this respect, the new system will differ crucially from the domestic rating system, in which the tax base covers less than half the population and in which a complex pattern of reliefs and exemptions has built up over a period. We do not propose to reproduce that pattern of exemptions and reliefs. However, we have proposed an exemption for the severely mentally handicapped on the grounds that people in that category cannot be expected to understand the concept of local authority accountability, and therefore should be excluded from liability.

After consideration of that policy in the other place, we announced our intention also to exclude people resident in nursing homes and residential care homes, such as people resident in hospitals and prisoners in custody, on the grounds that they too, in effect, are removed from the local democratic process. We are creating a consistent position within the Bill that is welcomed by those affected by it.

The hon. Gentleman asked how many severely mentally handicapped people will be affected by the exclusion. Between 5,000 and 6,000 people would fall within the category of severely mentally handicapped.

The amendments relating to severe mental handicap were brought forward by the Government in fulfilment of an undertaking given in Committee in the other place, that we would look very carefully at the question whether mentally handicapped persons living in the community should be exempted from the personal community charge. This question had indeed been raised during the passage of the Bill, in particular by my hon. Friends the Members for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) and for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart). Arguments were put forward that the severely mentally handicapped should be exempt on the grounds that such persons do not have the mental capacity to take part in the local democratic process.

That is the principle that we have accepted in the amendment, but the amendments also provide — this is the point raised by the hon. Member for Garscadden—that the definition of what constitutes "handicapped" may be revised by subordinate legislation. This provision draws on section 1(2) of the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984, but we think that it would be prudent to provide for the subsequent amendment of the definition of severe mental handicap to take account of any suggestions that are put to us by interested professional bodies in the course of consultation on the implementation of the provision, and of possible future changes in the clinical assessment of such conditions.

This, as the hon. Member for Garscadden realises, is a difficult area. It is important to have a definitional benchmark against which we can operate the exemption. The provision within the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984 allowed for that. The hon. Gentleman mentioned one or two possible areas about which it might be advisable to consult further. However, we have built in this flexible provision, which allows us to alter the definition should circumstances require that. But that is different from what the amendments propose. They would broaden the scope of exemptions for the mentally handicapped, by providing that all of them, and not only the severely mentally handicapped, shall be exempt. I cannot accept that, for two reasons. First, many handicapped people play an active part in the life of their communities, and are quite capable of appreciating the issues of local authority accountability.

Mr. Home Robertson: The hon. Gentleman would say that, would he not?

6.45 pm

Mr. Ancram: If the hon. Gentleman talked to some people who were not severely mentally handicapped he would find that the idea that they are not capable of taking part in the local democratic process, and should therefore be excluded, would be regarded by them as insulting. The hon. Gentleman should watch what he says.

Mr. Home Robertson: I said what I said because the Minister is illustrating the intentions underlying the Bill. As my hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) said, the legislation will make a number of people better off. I, my hon. Friend and the Minister will be better off. Someone will have to pay more, and the Minister will happily inflict this additional tax burden on handicapped and mentally handicapped people. He is proud of that, and it makes me sick.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman supports a rating system under which many mentally handicapped people pay rates——

Mr. Home Robertson: Go to hell.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) must withdraw that remark immediately.

Mr. Home Robertson: I withdraw it, but I think that the Minister knows what I mean.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman has not thought before speaking, because the system that he supports equally requires these categories of people to pay contributions to local government finance through the rates. The Government's policy is, as far as possible, to treat mentally handicapped people as ordinary members of society, and an exemption of the scope proposed by the hon. Member for Garscadden goes too far.

Mr. Douglas *rose*——

Mr. Ancram: Apparently the hon. Gentleman does not agree with the exemptions that we are proposing. He must make up his mind. If he wishes to intervene, I shall be glad to give way.

Mr. Douglas: I shall wait until I make my own speech.

Mr. Ancram: Secondly, the omission of the word "severely" from the description of those to be exempted raises potential difficulties of definition that would represent a considerable administrative burden for the personal community charge system. For that reason also, I cannot accept the amendments. To the hon. Member for Garscadden, I say that the flexibility is built in deliberately.

The hon. Member for Garscadden asked how the machinery works, and it is right to examine how the registration officer will handle the identification of those who qualify for exemption on the grounds that they are severely mentally handicapped. We envisage that the registration officer will in most cases rely on a simple certificate from an appropriate doctor that the individual in question meets the criteria. The steps in the process will be simple and straightforward. Where a responsible person has indicated on a canvass form or in response to other inquiries made by the registration officer that someone resident at the address in question is severely mentally handicapped, the registration officer will follow up the matter by asking the responsible person for a certificate by an appropriate doctor and its return to the registration officer.

We shall in due course be consulting the professional bodies involved in this process, and in the light of those consultations will prepare guidance for registration officers on the handling of these cases.

Mr. Douglas: This is absolutely nauseating.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman obviously believes that the procedure for exempting the mentally handicapped is nauseating. That is a depressing view, which will be noted by those organisations that have to deal with the problems of the mentally handicapped. I am confident that the procedure that I have explained will ensure that all, or virtually all, cases of exemption on the grounds of severe mental handicap are handled swiftly and with the minimum of fuss.

The hon. Member for Garscadden also moved amendments that would exempt all registered disabled people. That, too, would go much too wide: many registered disabled people hold down responsible jobs and play a full part in society. There is no possible justification for a blanket exemption of this kind. Lord Glenarthur, speaking in another place, recognised that many people next year would, for the first time, be making a contribution towards their rates, and thereafter to the community charge. He accepted that that was one factor that could affect the setting of the income support levels, and said that, in setting income support levels, we shall take into account the impact of this on the most vulnerable groups.

The Government plan to make their intentions clear reasonably soon, at the same time as issuing the draft

[Mr. Ancram]

housing benefit regulations to local authorities. It would obviously be wrong of me to pre-empt those announcements but I am sure that Opposition Members will agree that Lord Glenarthur's remarks show a clear commitment to assist the most vulnerable groups, including the disabled; so I hope that the House will accept that the Government are aware of the sort of problems that the hon. Member for Garscadden has raised. Thus, while I cannot accept the amendments moved by the hon. Gentleman, I commend the Lords amendments to the House.

Mr. Douglas: As many hon. Members know, I must declare a personal interest in these matters. I resent the strictures that the Minister tried to place on me in relation to what might be called severely mentally handicapped people. Under the system that he has outlined, for the first time, people will be asked to say, through a registration mechanism, that their child, husband or wife is severely mentally handicapped in a way which entirely lacks privacy, secrecy or confidentiality.

Mr. Ancram: That is not so.

Mr. Douglas: The Government said nothing about such secrecy. Now, the Minister says that it exists. The task will be that of the registration officer.

Mr. Ancram *rose*——

Mr. Douglas: I shall not give way.

The Minister did not answer the question about how many more people would get through the narrow gateway if the deletion were accepted. How many more people would be encompassed by the Bill if the deletion were made—10,000 or 20,000? The Minister should make no mistake: when the Labour Government come to power we shall have no truck with this. This is a poll tax—a head tax. We do not resent the register, but we should reject any system that identifies for taxation purposes people who are severely mentally handicapped. What a nauseating system.

The hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) played his part in this matter above all others by voting against our amendments on the Floor of the House. I make no apologies for being emotional about this issue. Physically and mentally handicapped people have enough to put up with in their households without having to fill in damn forms saying that their husbands or wives are severely mentally handicapped. This is a nauseating provision, and Conservative Members should be ashamed of themselves for introducing it.

Mr. Henderson: I understand the passion of the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) on this matter, but when he is speaking as a Member of Parliament he should not allow his passion to cloud his judgment of the facts. My hon. Friend the Minister sought to intervene to make those facts clear to him. *[Interruption.]* I want to be brief so that Opposition Members can speak in the debate. Does the hon. Gentleman wish to intervene?

Mr. Foulkes: Sit down.

Mr. Henderson: The amendments about which the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West spoke in earlier debates in the House cover a whole raft of possible exemptions. I supported the Minister throughout on the idea that one should resist the sweeping amendments that the Opposition seek to introduce in all sorts of situations. I am grateful to the Minister for recalling that my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) and I raised this matter on Third Reading before the Bill went to the Lords. I am grateful to the Minister for taking fully on board what we said at that time — that we hoped that the Government would treat mentally handicapped people as a specific category of exemption in the Bill.

I am not legally equipped to say whether the definition is right or wrong, but I am sure that the opportunity given by the clause to change the definition by prescription will in practice be inadequate. I am sure that the amendment strikes the right kind of balance. I am grateful to the Government for carrying through this sensible precaution. On a less emotional occasion, that move would be welcomed by the whole House. It is unfortunate that the Labour party is showing a rattled performance before we even start the election. I shudder to think what it will be like before the end of it.

Mr. Maclennan: No humane person, in the House or outside, could believe that the severely handicapped should be required to make a contribution to local taxation. It is astonishing that the Government, in their desire to bring forward a tax that is universal in its application, did not take that into account when deciding that we should debate this provision at this late stage. The principle that should be applied to the basis of the exemption is not that enunciated by the Minister, that there must be some test of the ability to take part in the democratic process by those who are subjected to local taxation. The proper test, and the one that would have exempted severely mentally handicapped and, indeed, almost all mentally handicapped people from paying this tax, is the ability to pay.

The Government are asking for the introduction of procedures like those that operated in Nazi Germany. It is wrong to ask people to make judgments about whether other people are able to participate in the democratic process. It is a nauseating way to achieve an end that ought to have been achieved by the simple test of the ability to pay, which is inherent in a local income tax.

Mr. Hugh Brown: I am sorry that we have only a few minutes to discuss what is obviously a subject that deserves a full debate. Hasty legislation is never good legislation, and this Lords amendment is an example of that. Our amendments highlight the practical difficulties that will face the administrators of this system. I can only guess at the reasons for the Lords amendment. Was it panic? In a mood of slight rebellion, did the Lords have to be bought off? Were their consciences bothering them because they would benefit from the Bill and needed to give some public appearance of caring?

Where did the words in the amendment come from? Who thought them up? There must be a precedent somewhere, although I know that the Minister will not have time to tell me where it is. How on earth will a local authority official administer this provision? As the Minister knows, I had bother in the Committee. If I were a Minister, I would not accept this Lords amendment. It is a phoney amendment and injects a new principle into a concession that has been given for some kind of disability.

What is the difference between mental disability and physical disability? Both are a loss of facility to enjoy life.

A severely mentally handicapped person should not, presumably, need a medical test. If a claim is to be made, someone else should be appointed to act for such people. The idea that there should be a curator bonis or some sort of examination is abhorrent to our whole system, and it follows from that that perhaps our amendments are also illogical. Does the Minister really believe that a medical certificate from a general practitioner will be acceptable? If he does, he must be joking. Housing authority walls are papered with thousands of medical certificates and we all know that they do not mean a damned thing.

This is the last speech that I shall make in the House, and I ask hon. Members to be practical. This system will be an administrator's nightmare, because of some of the personal reasons given by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas). I always understood that there was a strong degree of severe mental handicap among our noble families and, indeed, in the royal family. I do not know whether that was why the *Lords* passed the amendment. If we are elected, this legislation will be abolished. If we do not return to government, at least the Minister has the power to make regulations to try to improve this ridiculous attempt to present a caring image.

Mr. Foulkes: In what he said, the Minister gave clear and categorical proof that a poll tax is proposed. If we are talking about services that each person received, obviously, handicapped people of all kinds would participate and benefit from those services. The Minister said that for some reason a mentally handicapped person is unable to participate in the democratic process. By saying that he immediately, clearly and categorically linked the payment of a poll tax, pseudonymously called a community charge, to the right to vote. Thankfully, and once and for all, he has shown the House that we are talking about a poll tax. Therefore, we ought to have an amendment making it clear in all the legislation that it is a poll tax.

The phrase "community charge" is a kind of euphemism thought up by the civil servants to make the measure sound reasonably attractive, sensible and painless. In reality it is a poll tax linked to voting, and is meant to discourage disabled people from voting. It is meant to give something of an electoral advantage to the Conservatives and that is one of the principal reasons for their introducing it. We know that only too well.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman might be interested to know that nothing that I said today was new. I have said it before and I shall say it again.

Mr. Foulkes: It is certainly new to me. If the Minister did not call it a poll tax, he has given clear proof that that is what it is.

It being three hours after the commencement of proceedings on the allocation of time motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Order this day, to put the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

The House divided: Ayes 115, Noes 227.

Division No. 185] **[8.58 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Barnes, Mrs Rosemary
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Faulds, Andrew
Forrester, John
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Haynes, Frank
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Robertson, George
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Sheerman, Barry
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Wilson, Gordon
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. George Foulkes and
Mr. Dick Douglas.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Bellingham, Henry
Best, Keith
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brooke, Hon Peter
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount

Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mather, Sir Carol
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hert'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Viggers, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Gerald Malone and
Mr. Francis Maude.

Question accordingly negatived.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that hour.*

Lords amendment No. 31 agreed to. [Special Entry.]

Remaining Lords amendments agreed to. [Some with Special Entry.]

CONSOLIDATED FUND (APPROPRIATION) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Question, That the Bill be now read a Second time, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 54(1) (Consolidated Fund Bills) and the Order [12 May], and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

Consumer Protection Bill *[Lords]*

Considered in Committee.

[MR. ERNEST ARMSTRONG *in the Chair*]

Clause 4, as amended in the Standing Committee, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 5 to 8 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 9

APPLICATION OF PART I TO CROWN

7.13 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): I beg to move amendment No. 13, in page 6, line 37, after 'tort', insert 'or in reparation'.

The amendment adapts clause 9(2) for Scotland. The clause refers to the Crown's liability in tort under the Crown Proceedings Act 1947. However, the word "tort" is an English legal term of art. The 1947 Act defines it for Scotland as

> "any wrongful or negligent act or omission giving rise to liability in reparation".

The amendment reflects the terms of this definition by adding a reference to the Crown's liability in reparation under the 1947 Act.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 10

THE GENERAL SAFETY REQUIREMENT

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): I beg to move amendment No. 42, in page 7, line 10, leave out 'any person' and insert

> 'the British Standards Institution or the European Committee for Standadisation'.

This amendment is purely exploratory. The Minister and I have had an exchange of correspondence on this matter. I thought that it would be useful for it to be written into the *Official Report.*

Mr. Howard: The amendment attempts to restrict those standards of safety which will be considered in deciding whether consumer goods fail to comply with the general safety requirement to standards approved by either the British Standards Institution or the European Committee for Standardisation. The Opposition fear that some traders might attempt to write their own standards of safety to ensure that their goods comply with the general safety requirement. Those fears are groundless.

The purpose of clause 10(2) is to ensure that all the circumstances are considered when deciding whether consumer goods fail to comply with the general safety requirement. Along with all the qualifications in the preceding subsection (1)*(a)*, which concern the manner in which goods were marketed or used and in any nstructions or warnings given with the goods, and in the subsequent subsection (1)*(c)* concerning the existence of any means by which it would have been reasonable for the goods to have been made safer, we also have to consider ny standards of safety published by any person. Consideration of those standards will include the question whether the particular standard of safety which applies to he goods is suitable. If the published standard does not reach the level of safety which in all other circumstances is necessary, compliance with that standard will not necessarily be enough to outweigh consideration of these other circumstances.

There is a specific reference in subsection (3)*(b)*(ii) to "approved" standards of safety. These standards are more than likely to be British standards or, possibly, European standards, or may be suitable safety standards from any part of the world. But, for the purposes of clause 10(3), compliance with an approved safety standard will ensure that goods comply with the general safety requirement in relation to matters covered by that standard. No other fact then needs to be taken into account. Compliance with that approved standard will be sufficient.

For the purposes of clause 10(2), where all the circumstances are to be taken into account, any standard of safety will be taken into account, although, as I have just said, only if the level of safety provided by those standards is sufficiently high. There is, therefore, a distinct difference between the role of safety standards for the purposes of subsections (2) and (3). The amendment would seek to limit the generality of subsection (2) and, as I have sought to explain, compliance with approved standards of safety relates to subsection (3). I hope, therefore, that the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) will see that there is no need for his amendment and will withdraw it.

Mr. Williams: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Williams: I beg to move amendment No. 40, in page 7, line 36, leave out paragraph *(a)*.

Various organisations have expressed concern that, although we are establishing standards of safety of products in our country, we waive any such requirement for goods to be exported. Concern has been expressed by various lobbies that that would mean that many Third-world countries will sell products that would be regarded as substandard and unacceptable in this country. I should like the Minister to place his defence on record.

Mr. Howard: I remind the Committee of the genesis of this provision, which was in the White Paper, "The Safety of Goods", which was published in July 1984. In that White Paper the Government proposed that the general safety requirement would not apply to goods intended for export. It was explained at that time that a distinction had to be drawn between regulation-making powers and a general requirement such as the general safety requirement. While with a regulation-making power each case could be considered on its merits, that is not possible for a general requirement of this kind. The White Paper therefore concluded that it would be preferable, on balance, for the general safety requirement not to apply to goods for export. In these cases, it would be preferable to allow manufacturers flexibility to meet the safety requirements of the overseas market concerned. For example, an electric hair drier manufactured for use in a country which operated on a 110 volt electricity supply and used a two-pin unearthed plug might very well comply with the safety regulations of that country. It would clearly be unsafe here. If the amendment were passed, a United Kingdom manufacturer would be unable to make such a drier.

[Mr. Howard]

Moreover, I think that it is quite right to argue that other countries should have the right to set different safety standards from our own. Safety standards in any country tend to increase with its wealth. It is for the Government of the country concerned to decide what is acceptable, not for us. It has been suggested that our approach is in some way inconsistent with the White Paper "Standards, Quality and International Competitiveness". That could hardly be further from the truth. A crucial part of international competitiveness for our manufacturers is to allow them flexibility to compete with their foreign competitors. That will not be achieved if we impose standards upon them which might be quite irrelevant for foreign markets.

Therefore, it would be inappropriate to apply such a general requirement for goods intended for different export markets. We should allow manufacturers the flexibility to compete in foreign markets where the safety standards are properly set by the foreign Governments. For those reasons, I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will seek to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. Williams: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 10 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 11 to 13 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 14

SUSPENSION NOTICES

Mr. Williams: I beg to move amendment No. 48, in page 13, line 12, leave out 'that person' and insert 'any such person'.

The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): With this we may take the following amendments: No. 35 in clause 34, page 30, line 8, leave out 'and'.

No. 36, in page 30, line 10, at end insert

'; and

(c) it is shown that the officer did not have reasonable grounds for exercising the power'.

Mr. Williams: The Minister will appreciate that amendment No. 48 is purely exploratory, to give him a chance to put in the *Official Report* certain exchanges that we have had, to which other people should have access.

Amendments Nos. 35 and 36 have been tabled because of the concern of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. The Minister will be well aware that the compensation arrangements in the Bill are so wide that the authorities feel that they will constitute a disincentive to enforcement. They have suggested legitimate amendments to try to establish that the liability for compensation should lie where an enforcement authority has acted improperly. It seems to me that this is a fair and legitimate narrowing of the provisions. I hope that the Minister will look sympathetically at the amendment.

Mr. Howard The circumstances in which local authorities should be liable to pay compensation have been much debated, both on the present Bill in another place and on its predecessor, the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986, for which we are indebted to my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory). The present Bill does nothing more than consolidate the provisions of that earlier Act. In the light of their history, it is useful to recall why the provisions are in their present form, since they represent the outcome of considerable earlier debate and a change in the provisions in favour of enforcement authorities.

The new powers of suspension and forfeiture were suggested in the White Paper, "The Safety of Goods", published in 1984. That suggested that, because of the sweeping nature of these powers, compensation should be payable to traders wherever there was no conviction under the safety legislation. Compensation would not be paid when there was a conviction.

During the passage of the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986, it was suggested that such a compensation provision did not sufficiently reflect the practical difficulties that trading standards officers might face. We listened to those representations, with the result that the circumstances in which compensation would not be paid were substantially widened. Those new circumstances were enacted in the earlier Act and they have been consolidated in the present Bill.

It would be wrong to suggest that compensation will almost always be paid; that is simply not the case. Two conditions must be satisfied. They are that the goods have not contravened any safety provision—that is, that the goods are safe—and that the exercise of the relevant power of seizure is not attributable to any neglect or default by the person seeking compensation. The second condition is very important. It includes not just specific failures to meet obligations under safety legislation, but any act or omission which, in the circumstances, is blameworthy. It could include, for example, an unreasonable unwillingness to provide an enforcement officer with information about or access to the goods. In the light of this, I suggest that the circumstances in which compensation will be paid are relatively narrow.

The amendments put forward by the right hon. Gentleman, although expressed differently from the amendments to clauses 14 and 34, in practice would have a similar effect. The important question is what should happen in those unfortunate circumstances where goods are seized and nobody is to blame—the goods are safe; the trader has acted reasonably; and so has the enforcement officer. Such circumstances could arise where the enforcement officer relied quite reasonably on information supplied by a third party.

The effect of both amendments is that, in those circumstances, the trader should bear the loss. The Bill, as it stands, provides that the enforcement authority should bear the loss, and that is quite right. It is surely wrong that in providing powers for enforcement authorities to halt the supply of unsafe goods, we should do so at the expense of the innocent trader. We are simply not prepared to create a new burden of this kind on business.

Similar provisions concerning suspension of the supply of goods were enacted in the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986, which has been in force for eight months. It would appear that not one practical example is available to the right hon. Gentleman of a case where a local authority has been inhibited from taking action because of its concern over compensation. Yet, as is well known, the powers of suspension have been used.

We have moved from the position in the White Paper, but we do not believe that it could ever be right not to compensate the innocent trader. There does not seem to be any evidence of a practical problem here. I hope that, in the light of that explanation, the right hon. Gentleman will withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Williams: I am disappointed by the Minister's reply. While I can see the substance of many of his arguments, it remains that there may be a serious impediment to the import of modern, highly technical products, particularly new products.

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): I press my hon. and learned Friend a little further on this matter. He was well briefed in connection with my Bill, the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Bill, as it then was. I put great pressure on the fact that local authorities, if they wished, would be empowered to take action against goods that they considered to be within the remit. My hon. and learned Friend challenged the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) to produce evidence. The cases are far too numerous to bring to the attention of the Committee this evening. Many people, adults as well as children, will suffer this year and have suffered hitherto, not only because of the restrictions in the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986, but if this Bill goes on to the statute book in its present form.

The budgets of local authorities are limited and there are limitations in the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act. Regulation 5(1) states that it shall be the duty of each weights and measures authority to enforce—these are the three key words—"within its area" the provision of the safety regulations.

If a product is considered to fall within the limits of this Bill my hon. and learned Friend has suggested that the goods must be found and tested in the local authority's area. If they are found and tested in another area, that does not comply with the consolidated legislation being proposed to the Committee. That is a serious defect and loophole in the legislation which will be pursued.

I invite the Minister to answer the substantive criticism about the amount of insurance that local authorities will need to take out, because trading standards departments would have to put forward a sizeable amount of money. I feel that the Minister is unduly favouring manufacturers, particularly those who promote look-alikes. We are not talking about the good and bona fide products which have been tested properly; the Minister is championing the shoddy, poor products, particularly those from the far east and the Third world, which is not honourable.

Mr. Williams: I endorse the point made by the hon. Member for York (Mr. Gregory). Two thirds of the toys sold in Britain are imported and there is a vast influx at a time such as Christmas. As we have to make progress, for reasons that everyone well understands. As it is not our wish to delay the Bill in the limited circumstances available to us this evening, although the Minister has it wrong, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 14 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 15 to 23 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 24

DEFENCES

7.30 pm

Mr. Williams: I beg to move amendment No. 54, in page 21, line 47, at end insert

'and it shall be a defence, if the misleading indication is given in a printed catalogue, circular or price list, for that person to show that he informed the consumer in writing of the manner in which the indication was misleading before the consumer became legally bound to purchase the goods, service, accommodation or facility in respect of which the misleading indication has been made.'.

The Minister and I have had discussions within the past few days on the Bill's impact on mail order traders. He said that he was willing to give certain guarantees rather than to amend the legislation, and, as we are compacting the Bill's proceedings, it is proper that any such undertakings that he is willing to give should be clearly stated. Therefore, the amendment is intended not to be pressed, but to be a vehicle for him to state to the Committee what he has already stated to me.

Mr. Howard: I do not consider it appropriate to include a defence of the kind contemplated in the amendment in the Bill. As the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) said, the amendment is directed at special difficulties which might be faced by mail order traders. That seems to me a relatively narrow and detailed matter. The provisions of the Bill itself are meant to be of general application. The Bill already makes provision for codes of practice and for regulations, which are the proper means to deal with such matters of detail.

The proposed defence also goes much wider than can be justified. It could put consumers who make purchases through mail order catalogues in a rather worse position than those who buy goods in shops. For example, where goods in a shop are marked with one price but the customer is asked to pay a higher price at the checkout till, the trader has committed an offence under both the existing law and the Bill, even though the customer can simply decide to leave the goods at the till. The proposed defence would allow a mail order trader in similar circumstances to avoid committing an offence by sending a revised price indication to the customer with the goods, even though the consumer would be required to go to the effort of posting the goods back if he did not want them at the new price. That does not seem to me to be an acceptable outcome.

If genuine mistakes are made, the mail order trader will, as will any other trader, be able to make use of the due diligence defence in clause 39. However, I accept that mail order traders may face particular difficulties with the requirement in clause 20(2) to take all reasonable steps to ensure that consumers do not rely on a price indication which becomes misleading after it has been given. Therefore, my Department is considering with representatives of mail order traders what would be an appropriate definition of "reasonable steps" in those circumstances and I hope that it will be possible to reach an agreed solution. But I am confident that any solution can, and should, be reflected in the code of practice, or, if necessary, regulations.

I hope that with that explanation and assurance the right hon. Gentleman will be prepared to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Williams: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 24 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 25

CODE OF PRACTICE

Mr. Howard: I beg to move amendment No. 14, in page 22, line 49, at end insert—

'(1A) A contravention of a code of practice approved under this section shall not of itself give rise to any criminal or civil liability, but in any proceedings against any person for an offence under section 20(1) or (2) above—

(a) any contravention by that person of such a code may be relied on in relation to any matter for the purpose of establishing that that person committed the offence or of negativing any defence; and

(b) compliance by that person with such a code may be relied on in relation to any matter for the purpose of showing that the commission of the offence by that person has not been established or that that person has a defence.'.

The First Deputy Chairman: With this it will be convenient to discuss Government amendment No. 15.

Mr. Howard: As it stands, clause 25 makes provision for the Secretary of State to approve codes of practice for the purpose of giving traders practical guidance on the requirements of this part of the Bill and promoting desirable practice in the giving of price indications. It also provides for the approval of such codes to be subject to parliamentary procedures. However, as a result of amendments made in another place, it does not at present provide for an approved code to have any legal effect.

As introduced in another place, the Bill provided that compliance with the code should provide a complete defence to a charge of giving a misleading price indication. There were a number of reasons for proposing such an arrangement.

Clause 20 creates a wide general offence of giving a misleading price indication. That approach was adopted because the prohibition of specific practices — the approach followed in the existing legislation — allows rogue traders to invent new misleading practices not subject to the prohibition.

It does, however, have a potential disadvantage—that it may leave some uncertainty for the honest trader who wants to advertise that he is offering a bargain about whether a particular indication complies with the law. One way of overcoming this uncertainty is to provide that compliance with the code should be a complete defence. A trader could thus follow the relevant provisions of the code and be certain that he could not be convicted.

Against this, it has been suggested that making compliance a defence would allow rogue traders to exploit loopholes in the code. That argument is misplaced for two reasons. First, a trader could rely on the code only so far as it was relevant. He could not, for example, comply with the code in one respect, adopt an additional practice not addressed by the code and claim a defence in respect of that latter practice. He would have to argue that the practice was not misleading on its own merits with no reference to the code.

Secondly, should it transpire that any practice sanctioned by the code is open to abuse, there is a procedure for amending the code which could, if appropriate, be operated very quickly.

While the Bill was passing through the other place, we were presented with a package of proposals having the agreement of many of the main interests involved. The package included a proposal that compliance with the code should not be a complete defence. Instead, it was proposed that contravention or compliance should tend to establish guilt or innocence.

Clearly, proposals having the agreement of those interests must be taken seriously, but there were others not represented by the Condordat, as the group came to be known, whose views had to be heard. Therefore, we consulted widely and undertook to reflect the outcome of the consultation in the Bill. The consultation revealed a consensus in support of the status proposed by the Concordat. I therefore informed the House on Second Reading that I intended to lay the amendments now before the Committee.

The amendments that I have laid achieve what the Concordat sought; that is, that contravention of or compliance with the code will tend to establish that an offence has or has not been committed but will not be conclusive of either.

The amendment also has another effect. If a court is satisfied that a misleading price indication has indeed been given, the defences provided by the Bill may arise. The code may, in some circumstances, be relevant to some of those defences, in particular the due diligence defence provided by clause 39. In those circumstances, the amendment will enable compliance with or contravention of the code to be used in evidence as tending to establish or negative the defence.

Thus, a trader who complied with the code would not have a certain defence, but he would be very unlikely to be convicted of an offence. I believe that it will be in very unusual circumstances only that an enforcement authority will bring a prosecution against a trader who has complied with the code's relevant provisions.

In the light of these considerations, I believe that the status given by the amendment would give honest traders almost the degree of confidence that would have followed from the Government's original proposals. However, should rogue traders find any loophole in the code, which they can exploit to give a misleading price indication, the courts will now have the opportunity to convict in appropriate circumstances. There will, therefore, be powerful incentives for traders to comply with the code, which I am sure we can all agree is the desirable outcome.

Given the extent of support for this alternative in both Houses of Parliament and outside, I therefore think that the amendment is the most appropriate way to proceed.

Mr. Michael Shersby (Uxbridge): First, I wish to declare an interest. I am a member of the council of the Food and Drink Federation. As I understand it, the amendment will change the status of the code of practice so that it will be of evidential weight only in legal proceedings. Both the food and drink industry and the confectionery industry supported the original drafting of the clause, and, for reasons that I should like briefly to explain to the House, they are concerned about the clause as it will be if the amendment is carried.

The Concordat, which is comprised of retail, consumer and enforcement associations, has made representations about the status of the proposed code of practice and it argued that some provisions should be covered by regulations. The Minister has said that he proposes to accept the Concordat's proposal on the status of the code of practice and I assume that that is why he has tabled the amendment. If the amendment is carried, the code of practice will no longer constitute an absolute defence, as he has mentioned, but will merely be of evidential weight in legal proceedings.

Originally, as the clause was understood widely by those in the food and drink industry, the code's status as a defence meant that it set out what was good practice. Therefore, traders could see clearly what action they could take to remain within the law. Enforcement officers would also have the certainty that practices endorsed by the code were within the law. Disputes about whether particular practices were misleading or not therefore would be confined to those actions by traders who fell outside the provisions of the code, thus considerably narrowing the scope of such disputes to arise in the first place.

Furthermore, traders would have considerable flexibility in the use of price indications, and scope to develop new pricing practices that were not misleading. Consumers' interests would have been served by the widest possible adoption by traders of pricing practices in the code of practice which would set a standard of behaviour that would prevent consumers being misled. It would facilitate consumers comparing price claims by competing traders, and price comparisons would be more transparent than at present.

The original absolute defence status of the code of practice was, in the view of many people in the food industry, preferable in that it added a degree of flexibility. The person giving the indication still had the option of being able to show that, despite non-compliance with the code, he had not misled in practice. This would have avoided the arbitrary and rigid rules that are a feature of the present Bargain Offers Order. The fear that rogue traders could get around the provisions of the code and give misleading price indications while still being able to show that they had complied with the code, does not stand up. If there are practices which are endorsed by the code but which are misleading, I understand that so far none have emerged in the Department of Trade and Industry's consultations to date. Furthermore, the Bill contains provision to enable an amended version of the code to be approved at a subsequent date.

Given that my hon. and learned Friend the Under Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, has taken this Concordat proposal on board, it seems clear that the House will not reinstate the original status of the code of practice; that is to say, the absolute defence if the amendment is carried. However, while manufacturers and traders will be able to live with the amended status, there is a feeling that this route will introduce rigidity into the system, whereas the original proposal would have allowed greater flexibility in interpretation to ensure that action is taken only when there is a genuine concern that a price comparison or promotional offer is misleading to the consumer.

I am not clear whether my hon. and learned Friend the Under-Secretary has accepted the Concordat's proposals for regulations on specific provisions. Will he clarify his intentions a little further on these points: the 28-day rule; recommended retail prices; introductory offers; worth and value claims; and substantiation? In the view of the food industry, it is not necessary to regulate on those provisions. Traders and consumers will benefit from having the requirements covered in a comprehensive code of practice rather than the rigidity and relative technicality of regulations.

Price indications cover a wide range of circumstances and in the past have not been easy to regulate in specific statutory controls. The code of practice approach offers greater flexibility for traders than an approach which involves specific requirements in regulations. Regulations would lay down requirements that must be followed, giving rise to a number of specific offences rather than a single general offence, and would give rise to potential difficulties for enforcement authorities in identifying the appropriate charge to bring.

The Bill does not make it a legal requirement to follow the provisions of the code of practice in respect of the 28-day rule. Therefore, provided that the price indication is not misleading, it is open to traders to adopt a different basis for their price comparisons and, if they so wish, to indicate that they have done so. This allows flexibility for traders within the constraints of the general prohibition on misleading price indications. I hope, therefore, having explained to my hon. and learned Friend some of the worries that still exist in the food and drink industry and in the confectionary industry, that he will take those matters into account. Even if the amendment is carried, I hope that he will keep the matter under review.

Mr. Howard: The observations of my hon. Friend demonstrate convincingly the impossibility of pleasing everyone. We responded to the views expressed by the Concordat which represented an overwhelming consensus that our original proposals should be revised. My hon. Friend has advanced many cogent reasons in support of the original provisions in the legislation, but in the view of those whom we consulted, those advantages were outweighed by the disadvantages to which I referred when I moved the amendment.

The answer to the questions raised by my hon. Friend in relation to the regulations is that no final decisions have yet been taken as to which areas will be covered by regulations. However, he can rest assured that we will consult widely on those matters. It may be that the interests that he has represented this evening will be more fortunate in the context of those consultations and representations than they may have been in the context of the ones that led to the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 15, in page 23, line 6, leave out 'this Part' and insert 'subsection (1A) above'. — *[Mr. Howard.]*

Clause 25, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 26 and 27 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 28

TEST PURCHASES

7.45 pm

Mr. Williams: I beg to move amendment No. 39, in page 25, line 28, leave out paragraphs *(a)* and *(b)*, and insert

'be carried out by or at the expense of the authority in a manner prescribed by or determined under the regulations'.

The First Deputy Chairman: With this it will be convenient to take amendment No. 38, in page 28, line 4, leave out paragraphs *(a)* and *(b)* and insert

'be carried out by or at the expense of the authority in a manner prescribed by or determined under the regulations'.

Mr. Williams: I simply press the point made by the local authorities that, if the amendment is agreed to, by being allowed to choose the testing place that they prefer and by not being inhibited, as the Bill would otherwise do, they would have greater flexibility and also better cost benefits. Since the Government have been arguing that local authorities should try to be more efficient, local authorities feel that there is a case where they are arguing for efficiency and where the Government are limiting them. The Minister should take the opportunity to state his case.

Mr. Howard: The amendment would remove an essential power of the Secretary of State to prescribe by regulation that tests should be carried out only by specified test houses. This is not by any means a new power. It has been available for many years under both the Consumer Protection Act 1961 and the Consumer Safety Act 1978. It is important to appreciate the purpose of the powers in clauses 28(3) and 30(7). They are designed for a specific purpose, to restrict the choice of test house where the test concerned is of such a technical nature that it is necessary to require the appointment of a particular testing laboratory or laboratories to carry out the test under strictly controlled conditions. This may be necessary, for example, to achieve uniformity in the quality of technical evidence.

Some of those tests—for example, those relating to fire resistance and electrical safety—require expensive, specialised equipment and experienced, qualified people to operate it. The equipment and those people are to be found in only a limited number of test houses. Therefore, it is prudent in those cases to require that the tests be carried out only by establishments specified by the Secretary of State. If this were not stipulated — it would be impossible, if the amendment were adopted, for such a stipulation to be included in safety regulations — the enforcement authorities would be inclined to have the tests carried out by whatever laboratory, consultant, local technical college or similar body offered to carry them out on the most attractive terms. That would mean that the test results would be open to challenge in court, with expert witnesses disputing whether the specified test method had been followed or not.

The absence of any restricted lits of competent test houses would lead to uncertainty, dispute, and wasted effort and resources. It is far better for the legality or illegality of those products to be established beyond doubt and the only way of avoiding such doubt is to require that the hightly technical tests involved be carried out by only those establishments, relatively few in number, that are competent to do so, and are recognised by all experts in the field as being the only such establishments.

I assure the right hon. Gentleman that it has been and will continue to be our policy to use the power sparingly and to make every effort to mitigate any possible restrictive effect by approving as many test houses or laboratories as are technically competent to carry out tests. I hope that, with that assurance, the right hon. Gentleman will withdraw his amendments.

Mr. Williams: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 28 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 29 and 30 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 31

POWER OF CUSTOMS OFFICER TO DETAIN GOODS

Mr. Howard: I beg to move amendment No. 49, in page 28, line 27, leave out 'forty-eight hours' and insert 'two working days.'.

The First Deputy Chairman: With this it will be convenient to consider Government amendment No. 50.

Mr. Howard: These provisions have been the subject of considerable debate. The purpose of the amendments is to extend the period during which Customs and Excise can detain imported goods. The question how long it should be able to detain goods was debated extensively during the passage of the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986. The Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory) originally provided for 72 hours. The Government considered that 24 hours was sufficient and a compromise of 48 hours was eventually agreed.

Local authorities consider that, particularly over weekends and bank holidays, 48 hours does not allow sufficient time for them to form a view on whether to exercise their powers. The local authority associations have wanted the detention period to be used as a time when they can make rather more extensive examination of the goods concerned without having to use their formal powers to seize or suspend the goods, powers which would attract liability to pay compensation in the event that the goods turned out to be safe.

This issue has been a major bone of contention. It was raised on Second Reading, in Committee and on Report in another place and on Second Reading in this place. Having listened carefully to the points that have been raised in the many discussions on the subject, and having given further consideration to the potential difficulties of enforcement, I accept that significant difficulties may arise where the 48-hour period encompasses a weekend or a bank holiday. To overcome those difficulties, I propose that the period during which the Customs and Excise may detain imported goods should be altered to two working days. That will make no difference in the majority of cases, and therefore minimises the risk of challenge from the Community institutions. It will allow the enforcement authorities much greater flexibility in those cases where real difficulties may arise. I hope that the House will agree that this allows an adequate time for the limited purposes of the provision.

Mr. Williams: I welcome this change. It gives effect to amendments that we asked the Minister to make. I can only observe that it takes a long time to persuade the Minister to make even the most minor concessions. We have spent over a year trying to do that, and it has taken a general election to squeeze this concession from him. I am glad that he now recognises that the arguments that some of his hon. Friends, as well as Opposition Members, put forward about the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986 were valid and it leaves me with a grave suspicion that his stubbornness on so many other amendments that have been moved in the other place and here is something that he and the enforcement officers may come to regret. However, it would be churlish to make a sour point on a concession. It improves the Bill, and in those circumstances we welcome it.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 50, in page 28, line 30, at end insert—

'(2A) In subsection (1) above the reference to two working days is a reference to a period of forty-eight hours calculated from the time when the goods in question are seized but disregarding so much of any period as falls on a Saturday or Sunday or on Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 in the part of the United Kingdom where the goods are seized.'.—*[Mr. Howard.]*

Clause 31, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 32 to 41 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 42

REPORTS ETC.

Mr. Williams: I beg to move amendment No. 34, in page 34, line 21, leave out subsections (3) and (4).

This amendment also arises from a request from the local authorities, which feel that the requirements built into the Bill are cumbersome and costly. They ask whether such a wide-ranging requirement needs to be part of the Bill. This is to give the Minister than opportunity, hopefully, to have second thoughts on this issue.

Mr. Howard: This clause provides that a report on the functions relating to safety in the Bill should be submitted to Parliament at least once every five years. It would seem right that Parliament should be informed of the extent to which the powers in this Bill are being used and of the extent to which non-complying goods are found on the market. Basically we want to know whether the Bill is effective.

In order for the Secretary of State to prepare such a report, he needs information from the enforcement authorities. This clause therefore requires the enforcement authorities to report to the Secretary of State, as and when he directs, on how they have exercised their functions under this Bill.

These provisions are not new and are not an unnecessary additional burden on the enforcement authorities. Similar provisions are already contained in section 8(2) of the Consumer Safety Act 1978, which will be consolidated in this Bill. The House may recall that the Secretary of State submitted a report to Parliament in October 1986 on the working of that Act. The report to Parliament was based on the annual reports submitted by the enforcement authorities. This clause provides that the first report on the Bill before us shall be laid not more than five years after the October report to Parliament. I hope that that information will suffice to persuade the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Williams: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 42 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 43 and 44 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 45

INTERPRETATION

Amendment made: No. 28, in page 37, line 7, at end insert—

'(5) In Scotland, any reference in this Act to things comprised in land by virtue of being attached to it is a reference to moveables which have become heritable by accession to heritable property.'.—*[Mr. Howard.]*

Clause 45, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 46

MEANING OF "SUPPLY"

Amendments made: No. 16, in page 37, line 12, leave out ', or a contract for work and materials,'.

No. 17, in page 37, line 13, at end insert—

'( ) the performance of any contract for work and materials to furnish the goods;'.

No. 18, in page 37, line 36, at end insert—

'(2A) Subject to subsection (3) below, the performance of any contract by the erection of any building or structure on any land or by the carrying out of any other building works shall be treated for the purposes of this Act as a supply of goods in so far as, but only in so far as, it involves the provision of any goods to any person by means of their incorporation into the building, structure or works.'.

No. 19, in page 38, line 15, at end add—

'(7A) A ship, aircraft or motor vehicle shall not be treated for the purposes of this Act as supplied to any person by reason only that services consisting in the carriage of goods or passengers in that ship, aircraft or vehicle, or in its use for any other purpose, are provided to that person in pursuance of an agreement relating to the use of the ship, aircraft or vehicle for a particular period or for particular voyages, flights or journeys.'.—*[Mr. Howards]*

Clause 46, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 47

SAVINGS FOR CERTAIN PRIVILEGES

Amendment made: No. 20, in page 38, line 16, leave out from 'requiring' to end of line 20 and insert

'any person to produce any records if he would be entitled to refuse to produce those records in any proceedings in any court on the grounds that they are the subject of legal professional privilege or, in Scotland, that they contain a confidential communication made by or to an advocate or solicitor in that capacity, or as authorising any person to take possession of any records which are in the possession of a person who would be so entitled.'.—*[Mr. Howard.]*

Clause 47, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 48

MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS AND REPEALS

Mr. Williams: I beg to move amendents No. 55, in page 38, leave out line 29.

The First Deputy Chairman: With this it will, be convenient to consider Government amendments Nos. 51, 52 and 53.

Mr. Williams: We had a dispute over this issue on Second Reading and would undoubtedly have had quite a lengthy discussion on this had the Bill been proceeding in the normal manner, because hon. Members on both sides object to what the Government are doing. The import of the Bill is that it will no longer be possible legally

[Mr. Williams]

to require origin marking on goods in this country. Many organisations, particularly those concerned about South Africa and apartheid and so on, are deeply concerned that in the future there will be no possibility of imposing requirements on imported goods.

On Second Reading the Minister suggested that he was responding to a requirement of the EEC. We well understand the difficulties which he faces, but he went on to say also that further processes had been open to the Government: for example, they could have appealed, but they decided not to. Instead, they have capitulated at the first squeak from the EEC on this matter.

It is unfortunate that they have taken that course of action, particularly since, as yet, although it is many months since they first stated their intention, the promised form of a replacement for this protection has not been forthcoming. The Minister said on Second Reading that he was still looking for an alternative form of words. It has been a great many months. He said that one of the reasons for putting this provision in the Bill was that if we were good boys and showed the Common Market that we were willing to come to heel every time it scowled at us even slightly, it will no doubt be kinder to us when the Minister goes forward with his eventual proposal for an alternative. That is a dubious argument. It would be better to tell the EEC that, until we have an agreement, we are not willing to make any statutory concessions. We must have agreement on what is to replace the provision.

I have moved the amendment not to initiate discussion at this stage of parliamentary proceedings, but to give the Minister a last opportunity to reconsider. I notice that, instead of doing that, the Minister has tabled his own amendment to require at least an affirmative resolution. That takes up a point that I made on Second Reading or in Committee. The Minister's amendment is at least helpful. However, I still believe that the Bill would be better and our negotiating position stronger if the Minister accepted the amendment to withdraw the subsection.

8 pm

Mr. Howard: May I begin by outlining briefly the background to the amendments. The Trade Descriptions Act 1972 requires imported goods bearing a United Kingdom name or mark to be accompanied by an indication of the country of origin. It does not impose general origin marking requirements. It is intended to protect consumers against being misled by goods that are presented in certain potentially misleading ways. The Commission has said that it considers the 1972 Act to be incompatible with the treaty of Rome and has taken the first step in infraction proceedings that will lead fairly rapidly to a case in the European Court of Justice if we are not to repeal the 1972 Act.

In 1985, the European Court of Justice ruled against the United Kingdom's 1981 origin marking order in a case which the United Kingdom had vigorously contested. After careful study of that judgment, the Government reluctantly concluded that there was little prospect of successfully defending a case against the 1972 Act and that an unsuccessful United Kingdom defence could well have been counter-productive, since the terms of an adverse judgment might well have inhibited the scope for successful arrangements.

I am conscious of the widespread and strong feeling about origin marking. I am aware that many people feel that it would be wrong for the House to settle important changes in the law in this area without fuller debate than the present position allows. With that in mind, I have tabled an amendment which provides that the commencement order giving effect to the repeal of the 1972 Act will be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure.

Although that is a somewhat unusual procedure, I believe that it meets the present situation. It will relieve the next Parliament from the burden of repeating the primary legislative process while at the same time ensuring that the implications of repeal can be properly debated before it takes effect and by reference to proposals for successor arrangements.

Our latest exchanges with the Commission lead us to believe that it is likely to be possible to introduce a successor regime acceptable in Community law. That would provide a valuable degree of continuing protection to consumers in the form of an obligation to provide a sign of origin in any case where goods are presented in such a way that they can reasonably be expected to create the impression in the mind of the consumer that they were manufactured or produced in a different place from where they were produced or manufactured. Arrangements on those lines could be introduced by order under section 8 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 and the making and entry into force of such an order could be synchronised with the order bringing into force the repeal of the Trade Descriptions Act 1972.

Mr. Williams: I am glad to hear that at last some form of words has been arrived at, but I am afraid that it does not sound adequate to me. For example, where goods carry no marking, they will escape the provisions envisaged by the Minister. Therefore, for the reasons that I have put forward, I still believe that the Minister should have accepted the amendment. However, in this evening's circumstances, I beg leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn

Clauses 48 and 49 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 50

SHORT TITLE, COMMENCEMENT AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

Amendments made: No. 51, in page 39, line 14, at end insert—

'(2A) The Secretary of State shall not make an order under subsection (2) above bringing into force the repeal of the Trade Descriptions Act 1972, a repeal of any provision of that Act or a repeal of that Act or of any provision of it for any purposes, unless a draft of the order has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, each House of Parliament.'.

No. 22, in page 39, line 36, leave out subsection (8).—*[Mr. Howard.]*

Clause 50, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule 1

LIMITATION OF ACTIONS UNDER PART I

Amendments made: No. 29, in page 42, line 40, leave out from 'unless' to 'and' in line 41 and insert—

'a relevant claim was made within that period and has not been finally disposed of'.

No. 30, in page 42, line 42, at end insert—

'(1A) If, at the expiration of the period of 10 years mentioned in subsection (1) above, a relevant claim has been made but has not been finally disposed of, the obligation to which the claim relates shall be extinguished when the claim is finally disposed of.'.

No. 31, in page 42, line 43, at end insert—

'a claim is finally disposed of when—

(a) a decision disposing of the claim has been made against which no appeal is competent;

(b) an appeal against such a decision is competent with leave, and the time limit for leave has expired and no application has been made or leave has been refused;

(c) leave to appeal against such a decision is granted or is not required, and no appeal is made within the time limit for appeal; or

(d) the claim is abandoned'.

No. 32, in page 43, line 31, after 'him', insert 'in all the circumstances'.

No. 23, in page 45, line 4, leave out '*(g)*' and insert '*(gg)*'—*[Mr. Howard.]*

Schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule 2 agreed to.

Schedule 3

AMENDMENTS OF PART I OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ETC. ACT 1974

Amendments made: No. 52, in page 52, line 20, leave out 'forty-eight hours' and insert 'two working days'.

No. 53, in page 52, line 23, at end insert—

> '(3) In subsection (1) above the reference to two working days is in a reference to a period of forty-eight hours calculated from the time when the goods in question are seized but disregarding so much of any period as falls on a Saturday or Sunday or on Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 in the part of Great Britain where the goods are seized.'.—*[Mr. Howard.]*

Schedule 3, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule 4

MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

Amendments made: No. 25, in page 55, line 41, at end insert—

> *'The Insolvency Act 1986*
>
> 12. In section 281(5)(a) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (discharge from bankruptcy not to release bankrupt from liability in respect of personal injuries), for the word "being" there shall be substituted the words "or to pay damages by virtue of Part I of the Consumer Protection Act 1987, being in either case".'.

No. 43, in page 55, line 41, at end insert—

> *'The Motor Cycle Noise Act 1987*
>
> For paragraphs 3 to 5 of the Schedule to the Motor Cycle Noise Act 1987 (enforcement) there shall be substituted the following paragraph—
>
> "3. Part IV of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 (enforcement), except section 31 (power of customs officer to detain goods), shall have effect as if the provisions of this Act were safety provisions within the meaning of that Act; and in Part V of that Act (miscellaneous and supplemental), except in section 49 (Northern Ireland) references to provisions of the said Part IV shall include references to those provisions as applied by this paragraph.".'.—*[Mr. Howard.]*

Schedule 4, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule 5 agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments; as amended, considered.

Clause 2

LIABILITY FOR DEFECTIVE PRODUCTS

Mr. Williams: I beg to move a manuscript amendment, in page 2, line 50, leave out "industrial" and insert "initial".

This amendment returns to an issue that we discussed at some length in Committee. I do not intend to delay the House for long now. However, the Minister will recollect that there was some support from the Conservative Benches for our argument that the Bill missed the opportunity to extend protection to the consumer with regard to the supply of foodstuffs. We regret that the Minister has narrowed the protection afforded by the original directive whereby the only exemptions would be for foodstuffs that had not undergone initial processing. The Minister has limited protection and included the term "industrial process".

We have had extensive discussions on this point and we believe that the Minister has missed an opportunity. We have given an undertaking that we will facilitate the progress of the Bill, and we do not want to delay it for this item. However, had this been a normal Report stage, we would have had a considerable debate and probably a vote on this issue. Although we are not hopeful, we want formally to make the effort to give the Minister the opportunity to recant even at this, the last moment.

Mr. Howard: The preamble to the directive explains why we have chosen the words that are in the Bill. Perhaps it would be for the benefit of the House if I quoted the relevant passage in the third recital:

> "Whereas a liability without fault should apply only to movables which have been industrially produced; whereas, as a result, it is appropriate to exclude liability for agricultural products and game, except where they have undergone a processing of an industrial nature which cause a defect in these products".

That makes it clear that the reason why we have chosen to use the words "industrial process" in clause 2(4) is that they more accurately represent the intentions of the directive.

Perhaps I could begin by dealing with the use of those words and then say why I recommend the House to reject the amendment to line 50. We have departed from the words of the directive only when it has been important either to clarify the intentions of the directive or to use words which are more readily understood in the United Kingdom. In this case there are two reasons for us to use the words that we have used. The first is the intention of the directive as set out in the preamble which I have just read. I should also remind the House of the overall intention of the directive which is to harmonise the law for defective products that have been industrially produced. If we had used the word in the directive — that is, agricultural produce which had not undergone an "initial" process—we would not have conveyed the intentions of the directive that it is the industrial nature of the process which is important, not its place in the sequence of processes.

The second reason for using the words "industrial process" is that the words "initial process" could easily be interpreted to mean that, while the initial processing of agricultural produce might put that produce outside the exemption, subsequent processing — that is, the second and third process to which the produce may be subjected

[Mr. Howard]

—might not be caught by the exemption. Although this was obviously not the intention of the directive, it could be so argued on a strict interpretation of the wording of article 2. We have avoided that potential lack of clarity by using the words that we have. They have the additional advantage of reflecting the intentions of the directive.

For those reasons, I hope the House will reject the amendment.

Mr. Williams: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Order for Third reading read.

8.11 pm

Mr. Howard: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

I am glad that we have been able to complete consideration of the Bill in such an expeditious manner, no doubt having something to do with the rather unusual circumstances in which this takes place.

I pay tribute to the co-operation of the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams), who has confirmed the welcome that he gave the Bill on Second Reading by the way that he has assisted its passage. This legislation has been welcomed by both sides of the House and has been enthusiastically greeted by consumers and producers alike. I have great pleasure in commending it to the House.

8.12 pm

Mr. Williams: May I repeat our welcome to the Bill? We regret that one or two improvements that we and other hon. Members suggested have not been included, but it would not have been our wish to see the Bill fall because of those differences.

As I observed earlier, it is good that we have managed to continue a consensus approach on consumer issues, as we have done over a great many years. It has meant that the public have benefited from consumer legislation which is not continually threatened with repeal and alteration for political reasons. Therefore, we welcome the Bill. It could have been better but we are glad that it is completing its proceedings.

8.13 pm

Mr. Michael Shersby (Uxbridge): I should like to record my welcome for the Bill on behalf of my constituents. I believe it to be a very important and valuable piece of legislation and I am glad that it has been possible to carry it in this Parliament.

I am glad also that my hon. and learned Friend has taken account of some concerns expressed by those engaged in research in the pharmaceutical industry. They are particularly happy with the provisions of clause 4(1) *(e)* dealing with the state of scientific and technical knowledge. If this so-called state-of-the-art defence had been deleted, many companies in the pharmaceutical industry, three of which are in my constituency, would have been deterred from marketing potentially valuable novel products, whether intended to treat currently lethal conditions such as AIDS or lung cancer, or painful or disabling states such as arthritis, schizophrenia or senile dementia. I am glad that my hon. and learned Friend has responded to those legitimate concerns. Because of the consumer protection which the Bill provides in so many ways, there will still be every encouragement to develop new medicines for the benefit of the health of the people.

8.15 pm

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): I would also like to welcome the Bill. On behalf of my constituents, I have one broad question which I would like to ask the Minister. I have in my constituency, in Wisbech, a prestigious printer by the name of Balding and Mansell which is concerned that it may be blamed for textual errors in its printing. The British Printing Industries Federation wrote to the Minister and received a reply which said:

> "It seems to us reasonably clear that the Directive does not apply to mis-statement."

I would simply like the Minister to make it clear that it is not the intention of the Bill to do so.

The hon. and learned Gentleman may remember that, in 1979, Longman published a chemical textbook in which it got wrong a proportion between two totally unpronounceable chemical elements; it printed that the proportion should be 2:30 instead of 2:3. A school had a major explosion as a result. Of course Longman, who printed the book, would be responsible. I would simply like the Minister to say that it is not an intention of the legislation to hold a printer responsible for textual errors.

8.16 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): I simply wish to raise a point to which I referred on Second Reading. I had tabled amendment No. 26 for consideration in Committee, but in view of the circumstances with which we are faced and the knowledge that we would not divide on it, it seemed inappropriate to press it.

The foundry industry made it clear that it was not satisfied with the wording of clause 4(1)*(f)*. I have had a letter from my hon. and learned Friend, in which he has explained that he thinks that the concern of the industry can be dealt with under the terms of his letter. We hope that the interpretation which is placed on those words by the Minister will prove to be correct. This is an important and serious matter. If the Minister's interpretation were to turn out not to be correct, and if the matter proceeded to court, no doubt we would have an opportunity to correct the position in subsequent legislation.

8.18 pm

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): I heartily welcome the Bill and praise the work of my hon. and learned Friend at this late hour in this Parliament in seeking a dialogue with the Opposition and other parties in bringing the legislation to fruition. The Bill will be in the interests of consumers, including my constituents. We should not lose sight of the cardinal point, that each year some 7,000 people die in Great Britain in home accidents, a greater number than are killed on the roads. In addition, more than 3 million people sustain injuries which require medical attention. Clearly, with those devastating figures before the House, we must address ourselves to consumer safety.

In many ways, this is a blockbuster Bill because we are dealing with the entire concept of safety at the stage of purchase. Furthermore, we have given greater resources to local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland. I note the response from my hon. and learned Friend that that greater provision has increased from £60·9 million in the financial year 1983-84, to about £72·6 million in 1985-86. However, notwithstanding those extra financial provisions, there are still some remaining doubts and queries. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will consider them in the time that remains to us.

The new power of suspension of the threat of compensation is still a worry, especially where the tests can be carried out only by designated test houses. I understand that it can take three weeks for the official test reports to be received. The House has not had a full chance to examine the ramifications of that. So that the enforcement authorities are not discouraged, the strict rules on compensation need to be relaxed, either by an exemption from the compensation provisions, if an authority can demonstrate that it had acted reasonably, or for a limited period. I recommend a time limit of seven days during which an authority can arrange its confirmatory tests. In other words, compensation would not be available during the initial period if the goods were later found to comply.

I am not clear from the Bill who should receive the suspension notice. Perhaps my hon. and learned Friend can advise us. Is it the importer, the haulier or the warehouse owner? Can suspended goods be moved to another warehouse without any breach? In such a situation, there is no requirement for the local authority to be informed in advance of such a move, but vital goods can be properly supervised. These and other matters would, had the normal legislative process taken its course, have been examined week upon week and no doubt into the midnight hours. However, it has all been concertina-ed into a few days. The period of 48 hours is inadequate to determine whether goods might be suspect and whether that amounts to time for seizure and detention.

For a long time, I have felt that improvements in consumer safety are overdue. However, in this Parliament and with this major Bill, we have taken a step forward, not only for the consumer but also for the bona fide producer and retailer. I believe that that will be widely welcomed, and I commend it to the House.

8.22 pm

Mr. Howard: I am grateful for the remarks that have been made and for the welcome that the Bill has received from hon. Members of all parties. Two specific points have been made which call for a reply from me.

The hon. Member for Cambridge, North-East (Mr. Freud) asked for an assurance that it was not intended that the type of printing error to which he referred would give rise to liability under the Bill. I am happy to give him that assurance, although that may be rather less useful than the observation that I made in the letter to which he referred —that it is reasonably clear from the language of the legislation that that should not be its effect. Having regard to the attitude of the courts to the deliberations of this House, the clarity of the language, rather than any statement of intention, is likely to be of greater assurance to those who might be affected by such provisions.

In answer to the specific question posed by my hon. Friend the hon. Member for York (Mr. Gregory) as to whether suspension notices should be served on hauliers, shopkeepers or importers—I believe that those were the three categories that he identified—it depends on the circumstances, and especially on who had possession of the goods at the relevant time. It would be possible to serve a suspension notice on any or all of those categories, if they were the people in possession of the goods.

Naturally, I am delighted that we have been able to make progress and to complete the Bill's consideration in this House and I am grateful to all those hon. Members who have contributed to its speedy passage.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

Parliamentary and other Pensions Bill

Considered in Committee

[MR. HAROLD WALKER *in the Chair*]

Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill

Clause 2

POWER TO PROVIDE FOR PENSIONS

8.24 pm

The Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Harold Walker): I understand that amendment No.1 is not to be moved. Therefore, we shall consider amendment No. 2, in page 2, line 21, at end insert—

> '(*aa*) may provide, in the case of a person who ceases to be a Member of the House of Commons in any year between the ages of 55 and 60, having completed 20 years' service, for the payment of an unabated pension to him from the age of 60.'.

With this it will be convenient to discuss also the following amendments: No. 3 in page 2, line 21, at end insert—

> '(*aa*) may extend the entitlement to full and unabated pension to a person who, having reached the age of 60 and after completing 20 years of service as a Member of the House of Commons, has stood as a candidate and been defeated at a parliamentary election.'.

No. 4, in page 2, line 21, at end insert—

> '(*aa*) may provide for the payment of a lump sum to a person on his ceasing to be a Member of the House of Commons at the age of 65 or over, calculated on the same basis as the resettlement grant payable to a Member who has left the service of the House before attaining pensionable age.'.

Mr. John McWilliam (Blaydon): I beg your pardon, Mr. Walker. I thought that amendment No. 9 was to be moved by the Government.

The Chairman: No. That amendment now goes into what would be its proper place in the sequence of our proceedings. Therefore, it will come after Government amendments Nos. 5 and 6.

Mr. McWilliam: I do not wish to detain the House for any longer than is necessary. It is not our intention to press amendment No. 2. However, we expect to hear from the Leader of the House something about the subject that we are discussing.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I am grateful for that great constitutional innovation. I am unable to comment on what I know would have been powerful speeches delivered on behalf of amendments Nos. 2, 3 and 4.

The merits of these amendments are almost self-evident. They would specify a change that could be made by regulations under the power in clause 2. That power is already wide enough to allow regulations dealing with each of the proposed changes to be made. Therefore, it is not necessary to specify, in this way, individual matters that regulations might cover. Indeed, I do not believe that it is desirable to do so. However, it is clear that the amendments are intended to create the presumption that the scheme will be changed in these ways.

The first amendment would allow regulations to be made to extend the facility for early retirement with a full pension paid at the age of 60 to all Members with 20 years' service, who retire after the age of 55. The intention of the present rule, which allows Members with long service to retire at a general election at the age of 60, or after, without abatement of their pension, is to allow them to retire at the general election before their 65th birthday, rather than waiting until the next election or causing a by-election.

Although I recognise that the rule can cause some hard cases, changing the scheme as envisaged in the amendment would create a whole new set of anomalies. Those who retire at 55 with 19½ years of service, for example, would complain that the new rules were unfair to them. Furthermore, that would exaggerate the distinction between two classes of Member, those who can take their pension at 60 and those who must wait until they are 65.

The second amendment is intended to extend eligibility for immediate payment of a full and unabated pension to a Member who is aged at least 60, with at least 20 years' service, who stands for re-election, but is defeated, at a general election. That point can be dealt with briefly, because the scheme was amended to allow that during the passage of the Parliamentary Pensions etc. Act 1984. However, the fact that confusion has arisen about that provision is a good example of why the Bill is needed. This part of the existing legislation is so complicated, after the series of amendments, that it is not surprising that hon. Members have found it difficult to follow.

The third amendment would allow regulations to be made to provide for payments from the pension fund to Members retiring at the age of 65 and over, which would be equivalent to the resettlement grant paid from the Consolidated Fund to younger Members on leaving the House. In considering this point, I am sure that the Committee will wish to take account of the fact that the scheme already provides for Members to receive by commutation of part of their pension the maximum tax-free lump sum permitted by the Inland Revenue rules in similar private sector schemes.

I recognise that that is not directly comparable with the resettlement grant, which is a straight payment from the Consolidated Fund and is a benefit over and above what is provided by the pension scheme. Nevertheless, the commutation arrangements have clear tax benefits and should not be discounted when considering the means available to Members to secure a lump sum on retirement.

8.30 pm

I remind the Committee that resettlement grants are intended to tide over Members who leave the House before normal retirement age and need to re-establish themselves in alternative employment. Paying resettlement grants to Members past normal retirement age would be a new departure and I am not convinced that it would be justified.

However, I acknowledge that there are anomalies in the area where eligibility for immediate pension and for resettlement grants overlaps. I recognise that the area dealt with in the first amendment is also one where anomalies arise. Taking into account this point and the others raised during the Second Reading debate, I now believe that we should refer the scheme as a whole to the Top Salaries Review Body for an early review. In particular, I envisage that the review body would be asked to consider the early retirement arrangements and the anomalies caused by the availability of both a resettlement grant and an immediate and full pension to those who retire between the ages of 60 and 65 with 20 years' service.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): May I express the hope, which I trust the Leader of the House will endorse, that if the TSRB finds in favour of changing the existing arrangements, those of our colleagues over the age of 65 who are leaving the House now will not be excluded from benefit.

Mr. Biffen: I am sure that that is a factor which the TSRB will almost certainly consider in its judgment of what adjustments might have to be made to our scheme. Certainly its attention will be drawn to the right hon. Gentleman's intervention when the terms of reference are resolved at the beginning of the next Parliament.

The precise terms of reference for the TSRB would be a matter for discussion through the usual channels. That, again, covers the right hon. Gentleman's point. It would be helpful to set that in hand at an early stage in the next Parliament so that the House and the Government may have an opportunity to consider the TSRB's comments and possible changes to the scheme sufficiently in advance of April 1988 for Members to make an informed choice about whether to opt out of the parliamentary pensions scheme, as they will then able to do.

I do not believe that it is sensible for us to consider piecemeal the anomalies thrown up by the present rules of the scheme in advance of the TSRB's review of the scheme as a whole. To do so would merely create further anomalies. Therefore, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will feel that that is a reasonable response to his formal moving of the amendment.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): I had hoped that the minor changes which are embodied in the amendments and which would have a negligible impact on the finances of the parliamentary pension fund, which is in robust health, could be agreed and accepted by the Government.

The anomalies are clearly established. I had an exchange of letters with the Minister of State, Treasury, which entirely satisfied me that my anxiety on the second of the amendments was misplaced so I do not see why that should be pursued or referred to the TSRB. However, I am worried about the two remaining anomalies. The first concerns a person who ceases to be a Member of the House of Commons in any year between the ages of 55 and 60, having completed 20 years of service, and who will not receive an unabated pension at the age of 60. The second anomaly is that while all other hon. Members are entitled to severance pay or resettlement grant if they lose their seats at a general election, the only hon. Members who are not entitled to a lump sum are those who have reached or passed the normal age of retirement. Those anomalies are small, but they so disfigure the features of our parliamentary pension fund arrangements that they should be removed.

While I accept that major changes in the parliamentary pension scheme should await a further report by the TSRB, I am disappointed that the Government take the view that even those minor anomalies should first be considered by the review body. May I at least suggest to the Leader of the House that there should be a two-stage reference to the TSRB? The first stage, which we hope would lead to a swift, short report, would cover precisely the anomalies that have been identified. The second stage, which would deal with more fundamental features of the scheme, would be the subject of a more considered report.

I echo my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) when I say that it is my strong hope that any benefit flowing from the removal of anomalies in the present scheme will be made available to our colleagues in the present Session who will not be with us when the new Parliament assembles.

Mr. Jack Dormand (Easington): I wish to add my disappointment to that of my right hon. Friends the Members for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) and for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) in relation to the resettlement grant. The reference of that and the other matters to the TSRB is a stalling exercise. I would have thought that the House could decide those matters. As has been said, the sum involved is negligible and, moreover, the fund is healthy.

It is generally recognised that the term "resettlement grant" is something of a misnomer. This has been taking place for many years in both the private and public sectors and is usually referred to as a lump sum on retirement. To designate it as a "resettlement grant" to help hon. Members to obtain alternative employment is a misuse of words. We are talking about hon. Members who have served many years, enduring the usual disadvantages of parliamentary life, such as long hours, and that should be recognised by what should be called a "lump sum", not a "resettlement grant". That is the basic difficulty facing the House.

We have had helpful private talks with the Leader of the House, who has a reputation for listening carefully. In view of what has been said by three hon. Members tonight, and as many right hon. and hon. Members have approached me as the chairman of the parliamentary Labour party, I hope that the Leader of the House will recognise that this is an annoying and frustrating position. I hope that he will take cognisance of what we have said and see whether we can proceed differently from the way in which he has proposed.

Mr. Biffen: I shall respond briefly to the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) about the terms of reference that will govern the consideration of the TSRB early in the next Parliament. Naturally, they must be the subject of widespread consultation through the usual channels. He will appreciate that I cannot say now, indeed it would be a gross presumption to say now, what those terms of reference will be. Certainly they will not be concluded merely by whoever happens to be in Government and holding the post of Leader of the House. They will be the subject of proper consultation, but the point that the right hon. Gentleman makes is a perfectly fair one, because there should be a two-stage consideration of these matters. I am sure that that will be borne in mind.

I say to the hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) that the term "resettlement grant" is not an invention of the Treasury Bench. It was suggested by the TSRB in its report, which sought to make clear the purpose of the grant—the payment to an hon. Member who had left the House but who had not reached the age of retirement. It was clearly intended not just to be a supplement to one's position on leaving the House. It was specifically meant for someone who left the House in anticipation of having reached full retirement age.

I have noted what the hon. Gentleman said and he knows perfectly well that what he says, although he will not be here to grace us in the next Parliament, will echo

[Mr. Biffen]

on to inspire those who have to consider the terms of reference for the TSRB, and I hope that he will be consoled by that thought.

Mr. McWilliam: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The Minister of State, Treasury (Mr. Peter Brooks): I beg to move amendment No. 5, in page 3, line 8, after 'instrument', insert

'subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.'.

The Chairman: With this it will be convenient to take amendment No. 6, in page 3, line 12, leave out from 'them' to end of line 14.

Mr. Brooke: On Second Reading several hon. Members expressed concern that the change from primary to secondary legislation, which the Bill proposes, would mean that the House of Commons would have fewer opportunities to debate and amend the scheme.

I agreed to consider that point and I am happy to give an undertaking on behalf of the Government that time will be made available for a debate on an amendable motion before any regulations amending the scheme are made under clause 2. This would allow, for example, the sort of debate that we had in July 1983 on the recommendations of the TSRB which led to the changes to the scheme that were made in the 1984 Act. The arrangements will be similar to the procedure for determining hon. Members' pay and allowances.

In accordance with the procedure which I hope we will shortly enact, through amendment No. 9, the trustees' comments on the Government's proposals will be available to hon. Members for debate. The views of hon. Members expressed in the debate will be taken into account when the regulations are subsequently introduced. If such a debate is always to be held, it will usually be unnecessary to hold a debate on the regulations themselves. This amendment, therefore, substitutes the negative procedure for the affirmative procedure currently provided for in clause 2(7).

Mr. Shore: On Second Reading on 27 April I expressed my anxieties, which were widely shared, about the central purpose of the Bill, which is to enable further changes in the parliamentary pension scheme to be made not by amending legislation but by regulations issued by the Leader of the House. I think that the House took the point that if we were limited to debates on regulations we could not amend them, we could only vote them down, which is a considerable restriction on our normal freedom of debate and, furthermore, debates on regulations normally take one and a half hours. I thought that that was not a satisfactory way of proceeding and I suggested that changes should be introduced so that proposed changes could be put to the House in the form of an amendable motion.

That was where we left matters at the end of that debate and I was glad to receive a letter from the Leader of the House informing me:

"We intend to give an undertaking that there should be an opportunity for Members to make their views clear, in a debate on an Amendable motion, before regulations are finalised."

That is the background to the Government amendments to clause 2 that are now before us. Having heard the Minister of State say quite categorically that the House will be able to debate an amendable motion before regulations are finalised, I consider that adequate assurances have been given and I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman and the Minister of State. I agree that we no longer need the affirmative resolution procedure and that we can be content with the negative resolution procedure which is the subject of the amendments.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): I should like to add the thanks of Conservative Members for the way that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and my hon. Friend the Minister have responded to the sentiments that were expressed in our debate on Second Reading and in the subsequent discussions. It seems that it has been a very constructive process and that the Bill has been much improved as a result.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 6, in page 3, line 12, leave out from 'them' to end of line 14.

8.45 pm

Mr. Brooke: I beg to move amendment No. 9, in page 3, line 14, at end insert—

'(7A) Where the Leader of the House of Commons has made any proposals for the making of regulations under this section, a copy of any representations made to him by the trustees of the Fund about the proposals shall be laid before the House of Commons.'.

Amendment No. 1, which the hon. Member for Blaydon (Mr. McWilliam) did not move, sought to give the trustees a more active role in the process of amending the scheme by regulations. We appreciate the knowledge and expertise of the trustees, which equip them for such a role. We are committed to allowing the House an opportunity to debate the proposals for amendments to the scheme, and it seems right that the trustees should advise the House at that stage, while leaving the final decision to the House. Amendment No. 9 would allow that by providing for the trustees' comments on proposals for amendments to the scheme to be laid before the House so that they can be available for debate. I described the arrangements for this debate when we debated amendments Nos. 5 and 6.

Mr. McWilliam: I am grateful to the Government for their response. I think that I went over the top on Second Reading. I think that the Government have understood perfectly the point that I was making and it has been incorporated in their amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3

EXCHEQUER CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUND

Mr. Alfred Morris: I beg to move amendment No. 8, in page 3, line 44, leave out subsection (4) and insert—

'(4) If it appears from the report of the Government Actuary under this section that there is a deficiency or surplus in the operation of the scheme, then, subject to the following provisions of this section, the rates of contribution under this section may be increased, or, as the case may be, reduced in accordance with those provisions or all or any of the rates of benefit may be reduced or, as the case may be, increased in accordance with those provisions.

(4A) An alteration of the rate of contributions may be made by Resolution of the House of Commons.'.

As the House knows, I speak as chairman of the managing trustees of the parliamentary contributory pension fund. My amendment reflects the concern that I expressed when the Bill had its Second Reading about the amendment in 1972 to the 1965 Act, under which benefits and/or Members' contributions could be varied in the light of any surplus or deficiency revealed by an actuarial review of the fund.

The 1972 Act, by contrast, left the Exchequer contribution to the fund to be determined by the Government Actuary at the level necessary to balance assets and liabilities. This means that the fund can never go into surplus, no matter how well the investments perform. At the same time, it means that our prospects of improving the pension scheme, based on successful investment management, are effectively vetoed since the Exchequer contribution to the fund falls in proportion as that management succeeds. That penalises good management and puts the trustees, in the view of some who have commented on the working of the 1972 Act, in the unenviable position of being incapable of acting in the best interests of the members no matter how successful they are in increasing the fund's assets. This, we must all recognise, is the other side of the coin to which my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) referred when he spoke of the fund being in such robust health.

Following a meeting that I attended in the office of the Leader of the House yesterday, he was prepared to amend the Bill so that there would always be a debate on the Government Actuary's report when it was laid before the House. That would have enabled the trustees and other hon. Members to suggest changes in the fund in the light of its assets and liabilities. I now understand that, unfortunately, parliamentary counsel has advised that an amendment on these lines would not be practicable under the existing Standing Orders. Instead of amending the Bill in the way in which the Leader of the House was prepared to do yesterday, I am informed that the Minister will give an undertaking tonight to provide time for a debate on every report from the Government Actuary. I appreciate the Minister's difficulty, just as I know that he understands both my reasons for tabling the amendment and that it is strongly based. I regard the Minister's undertaking as constructive and helpful and will not, therefore, press the amendment.

Mr. Brooke: The amendment moved by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) seeks to provide a mechanism for benefits and Members' contributions to be adjusted in the light of the performance of the fund. It suggests a new procedure for amendments to be made to the scheme by resolution of the House. That would cause conflict with the object of the Bill, which is to enable the scheme to be set out, as far as possible, in consolidated form in regulations.

Nevertheless, I recognise the concern expressed by hon. Members, both tonight and on Second Reading, that the performance of the fund should be reflected in their contributions or benefits. I recognise that they would welcome the opportunity to consider the scheme from time to time, in the light of the state of the fund. On behalf of the Government, I am happy to undertake—as the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe foreshadowed—that a debate will be held on each future report from the Government Actuary.

In considering whether to go further we should remember that in the past Members have benefited from the arrangement—common to all public service schemes and many private sector schemes — whereby their contributions are fixed as a percentage of salary while the Exchequer meets the balance of the cost, which will therefore vary with the performance of the fund's investments. We should be cautious about proposing alternative systems linking Members' contributions to the state of the fund. That might offer benefits in the short term, but it would, in the longer term, shift the risk of fluctuating contributions from the Exchequer to Members. Such an arrangement may also hinder improvements to the scheme at times when the fund was not performing well.

I am grateful to the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe for stating that he will not press his amendment in the light of the undertaking that I have given on behalf of the Government. I know that hon. Members greatly appreciate the knowledge, expertise and services of the trustees, of whom the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe is so distinguished a chairman. I hope that that is a suitably happy note on which to conclude the Committee stage.

Mr. Alfred Morris: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4

AMENDMENT OF MR. SPEAKER KING'S RETIREMENT ACT 1971

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Kensington): I wish to make known something that is not generally appreciated by hon. Members.

In 1968, shortly after I was elected, I won first place in the ballot for private Members' motions and chose as a subject for debate the protection of the pension rights of early leavers. Mr. Speaker King, as he then was, asked me to talk to him before I made my maiden speech. I was glad to do that for the benefit of his advice. I told him that I had suffered the loss of my pension rights after 14 years' service in the company in which I was first employed. In exchange I had received only a small return on my contribution. I told Mr. Speaker King that, in due course, I hoped to be able to persuade the House to amend the law in relation to the rights of early leavers so that early leavers received fair compensation for their pension rights. Unfortunately, I have not yet been successful in that.

Mr. Speaker King told me that his circumstances were worse than mine. At the time of his election he had completed nearly 20 years' service and contributions to the teachers' pension fund. However, because he had not quite completed those 20 years' service when he was elected to the House, he lost the whole of the benefit of those years of service. I believe that circumstances would be different now. However, I recall very well the statement he made to me as to his personal loss when he became a Member of the House.

[Sir Brandon Rhys Williams]

I suggest that that is a particular reason why the House should view with sympathy the circumstances of Lord Maybray-King and make suitable provision for his surviving spouse.

Mr. Brooke: I said, prematurely, that we had finished the Committee on a happy note, but, by the remarks he has made, my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) has provided an even happier note.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 4 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 5 to 7 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedules 1 to 4 agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments; as amended, considered.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be now read the Third time—*[Mr. Biffen.]*

8.56 pm

Mr. Dormand: The nature of this evening's debate and indeed all other debates on pensions have shown us all how complicated pensions matters are. That applies to all previous debates on pensions. In those circumstances, and in view of the fact that I shall not be returning to the next Parliament, that demonstrates the difficulties of administering the scheme.

Tonight, I should like to pay tribute to the accountant, Mr. Dobson, his deputy, Mr. Lewis, and all the staff of the Fees Office for the splendid way in which they administer the scheme. If I may stray slightly out of order, that praise is not only for the way in which they administer the fund but for the way they deal with Members' allowances, expenses, and so on.

I know I speak for the whole House when I say that the service we receive from the Fees Office is extremely efficient. We receive unfailing courtesy from all the members of the Fees Office. It gives me great pleasure to place that tribute on record tonight.

Mr. Shore: I am sure that the whole House will wish to endorse the generous sentiments that my hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) has expressed in relation to the work that the Fees Office does on the complicated matter of the parliamentary pensions fund. I think it is also right for me to thank my hon. Frienf for his intervention and to say how greatly we shall miss him in the future. Tonight, we have listened to him with interest, as we have listened over many years to his many remarkable contributions to the proceedings of the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed, with amendments.

Lord Chancellor's Salary

Motion made and Question proposed,

That the draft Lord Chancellor's Salary Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 29th April, be approved.—*[Mr. Biffen.]*

9 pm

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): In this election year, the Government have been careful, with their pay awards to the public sector. Two years ago, the House was outraged when the Lord Chancellor's salary order allowed for an increase of 16·6 per cent. not only for the Lord Chancellor but for those employed in the highest levels of the public service.

That was in the same year that the Government were officially pursuing a 3 per cent. a year public sector pay policy and were reluctantly forced to concede 5·6 per cent. for nurses. This year, by contrast, the Lord Chancellor's and other top salaries will be increased by 4·5 per cent., while nurses are to receive 9 per cent. that is progress. Nevertheless, we should look more carefully at the absolute levels of pay and not just at the percentages.

The increase of 4·5 per cent. may appear to be modest, but it appears to be much less so when we recall that the Lord Chancellor's salary presently starts at £79,400 and, as a result of the order, will rise to £83,000 in October 1987. An extra £3,600 is a substantial increase. It appears to be all the more so when we consider the only other order affecting pay that the House has approved this week. I refer to the Employment Subsidies Act 1978 (Renewal) (Great Britain) Order 1987 that was approved last night. That order authorised the continuation of the Department of Employment's scheme to pay employers £15 a week subsidy to take on 18, 19 and 20-year-old employees, provided only that they are not paid more than £65 a week.

The contrast between yesterday's order and today's illustrates yet again not only the Government's resolute pursuit of income inequality but the totally contradictory view that the Government appear to hold about the working of incentives. For the poor, low pay is an incentive to hard work, and indeed the only means of gaining employment. For the well-to-do, high pay is a necessary incentive to hard work and a proper reward for talent. I do not accept that view—nor, I believe, do the great majority of people. Nor am I convinced in any way by the assertion that the Lord Chancellor's salary is immovably fixed in relation to that of the Lord Chief Justice. The doctrine that the Lord Chancellor must have whatever the LCJ receives, plus £2,000, is simply unconvincing.

I must warn the Government about future Top Salaries Review Body awards and top salaries in the public sector. In many instances, top salaries are set by what is considered to be comparable work and comparable responsibilty in the private sector. In the past two years, and particularly since the big bang in the City, there has been a veritable explosion of top rewards and top pay in the private sector, If that is to be reflected in future TSRB reports on pay in the top echelons of the public service, we shall see a massive increase in public sector pay at the top level. I do not believe that that will be acceptable to the great bulk of public sector employees, far too many of whom are among low-paid workers.

I shall say no more, but it is right to alert the House and the TSRB to what may become a major concern in the near future.

9.3 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): It would be a courtesy if I respond, albeit briefly, to the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore). He has used the occasion to broaden the consideration of the Lord Chancellor's salary into a wider economic policy discussion. If, over the next few weeks, we are confronted by claims from him and his political colleagues that we need policies in terms of income determination and publicly influenced income determination that will squeeze differentials and if we are to have taxation policies that will squeeze differentials, we should be able to have an open and clear debate about what kind of society our respective economic policies are designed to produce, the right hon. Gentleman and I will engage in an argument with relish. I have a suspicion that, at the end of the day, there will be a better public appreciation and understanding of the argument for differentials than there would be for the argument for compressing them through either the mechanism of an incomes policy or taxation. However, I have no wish to broaden the matter unnecessarily.

However, I remind the House why the order is needed. The requirement stems from the link between the salaries of the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice. That link derives from the Top Salaries Review Body recommendation—again, not some thought emanating from the Treasury Bench, but a response to the 1983 TSRB recommendation that, in recognition of his position as head of the judiciary and his responsibility as a whole, the Lord Chancellor should be paid more than the Lord Chief Justice. I commend that attitude to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Lord Chancellor's Salary Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 29th April 1987 be approved.

Channel Tunnel Bill

9.5 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): I beg to move,

That further proceedings on the Channel Tunnel Bill shall be suspended until the next Session of Parliament;

That if a Bill is presented to this House in the next Session in the same terms as those in which the Channel Tunnel Bill stood at the last stage of its proceeding in this House in this Session—

(a) the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first, second and third time; and

(b) the Standing Orders and practice of the House applicable to the Bill, so far as complied with or (in the case of the Standing Orders relating to Private Business) dispensed with in this Session or in the Session 1985-86, shall be deemed to have been complied with or (as the case may be) dispensed with in the next Session;

That this Order be a Standing Order of the House.

The purpose of the motion is straightforward: it is to preserve the work already done in the House on the Channel Tunnel Bill to enable the Bill to recommence its passage through Parliament promptly in the new Session. Hon. Members will know that it is normal practice to carry over private and hybrid Bills from one session to the next and from one Parliament to the next. The Channel Tunnel Bill has already been carried over by both Houses from the 1985-86 session to the present one, and a further carry-over will, once again, enable work to continue without duplication and without imposing further burdens on the House and on the petitioners.

The effect of the motion is that, upon reintroduction to the new Session in the form in which it has been passed by this House in the present Session, it will be deemed to have passed all its stages in the new Session and will forthwith move straight to the other place. The House will then, in due course, receive the usual opportunity to consider amendments made in the other place before the Bill receives the Royal Assent. I commend the motion to the House.

9.7 pm

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): The hour is getting on and I shall not detain the House to an unreasonable extent, but, at the same time, at the risk of disturbing the end-of-term euphoria, the motion must have some critical scrutiny before we allow it to pass. It is a somewhat unusual constitutional device. A carry-over motion is known, but still relatively rare, for private Bills, but it is extremely rare for hybrid Bills. I wish to ask my hon. Friend the Minister to tell us what precedents there are for carrying over an important hybrid Bill with such enormous public policy implications as this one has. He will have to dig almost as deep as the Channel tunnel and the last Channel Tunnel Bill to find such precedents.

It would have been wiser to allow the new Parliament to decide whether to prolong the agony of the Channel tunnel by means of the reviving motion, which is an alternative option, rather than to keep the patient alive by means of the artificial life support machine that we are debating tonight. Now that the Government have decided to table the motion, there is a need to ask certain questions and seek certain assurances, because, at the very least, there are markers to be put down for the next Parliament and lessons to be learnt from the unhappy progress of the Bill so far.

[Mr. Jonathan Aitken]

I call it unhappy progress because anyone who is neither on the payroll of Eurotunnel nor on that of the Government would have to admit that the saga of the tunnel so far has been a mutual disappointment. Even those who support the Channel tunnel in principle must regret the extremely slow progress of the Bill and be critical of the Government and Eurotunnel for losing their way so often in recent months. After all, the project in its present form was introduced to Parliament nearly two years ago and in the intervening months there has been a great deal of fumbling and bungling, and still the Bill is less than two-thirds of the way through its legislative stages.

Outside Parliament, there is a conspicuous lack of national enthusiasm about, or even interest in, the project, and there is deep hostility in east Kent, manifested by some worrying local election results in the affected areas last week. There has been a continuously poor public relations reception for the management upheavals and mistakes that have bedevilled the Eurotunnel consortium, and there is rising scepticism in the financial and investment community as to how on earth the missing 96 per cent. of the funding for the project will be raised—especially the £750 million of equity, which has been postponed three times so far.

Against that background, I should have thought that the Government would approach the carry-over motion with some caution and humility. Instead, the wording of the motion seems to suggest an atmosphere of complacency and self-satisfaction that the project and the legislative structure surrounding it are in such perfect shape that we should automatically rubber-stamp it and send it on to the new Parliament without a doubt or a second thought.

Not for the first time in these proceedings, I take a different view from that of the Government. Before we pass the motion, I wish to highlight three main, continuing areas of unhappiness about the Bill on which I seek reassurances.

The first area of unhappiness lies in our cumbersome parliamentary procedures on the Bill. These procedures have been tested almost to destruction as a result of the Channel tunnel proceedings and have failed badly. That is because they have caused considerable dissatisfaction to promotors and petitioners alike, to specialist investors and to the general public. Perhaps above all they have been a source of considerable dissatisfaction for the parliamentarians, who were lumbered with the unwelcome task of sitting on the various Committees. Perhaps only the well-paid lawyers are satisfied, but even some of them in their quieter, private moments will have thought that they were taking part in nothing more than a lucrative charade.

The hybrid Bill procedure and its accompanying Select Committee hearings simply do not stand the test of being a fair way of hearing objectors and petitioners. Nor do they stand the test of being an efficient and thorough way of assessing a giant construction project from all angles within a reasonable time scale. With an eye on the next Parliament we should ask ourselves why the hybrid Bill procedure failed and what alternative procedures should be put in its place. First, the hybrid Bill procedure failed because everyone was surprised by the number and quality of the objectors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman is going very wide of the motion before the House. He should address himself to the motion rather than seek to initiate a debate about our procedures.

Mr. Aitken: I think that it is relevant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I shall show in a minute that there is a strong possibility that the Bill will have to go back to square one, with the possibility of a new treaty in view of the financing arrangements. Therefore, it is highly germane to look for a moment or two at why the hybrid Bill procedure did not work and could not work again. One reason why it did not work is that a Committee consisting of laymen Members of Parliament picked on the recommendation of the Whips Office, inevitably turns out to be partisan, with no great expertise, and much whipping. It gave an impression of impatience and, at times, intolerance, and that was one reason why there was a haemorrhage of public confidence.

To illustrate that point I can do no better than quote from a speech made in Kent by the distinguished director of the Council for the Protection of Rural England, Mr. Robin Grove-White, who said:

> "Last year ministers promised repeatedly that all objectors would be given a fair hearing — an important promise, given the range of impacts expected from the tunnel.
>
> At the bill's committee stages objectors were badgered again and again by impatient select committee members, reflecting the strict instructions of Government whips that the committee meet the Government's absurdly short timetable.
>
> Witnesses like the CPRE found themselves required to give evidence higgledy-piggledy, in no logical sequence or order, making it all but impossible for them to deploy coherent cases in the fashion they felt necessary.
>
> Lots of objectors found their supposedly sacrosanct rights of appearance under Parliament's standing orders bent and twisted, simply to speed the procedures along."

If a neutral body like the Council for the Protection of Rural England claims that it has seen its rights of audience in the House bent and twisted, before we pass the motion we should seek an assurance for the future that we will review these procedures, especially if, for example, there is a collapse of funding—I shall speak about that in a moment—and the need for a new treaty in view of a confidential report from the French Government. If we are asked to go back to square one in the new Parliament, we must have different procedures from those that we have in place. I notice that the Government are thinking of using the hybrid Bill procedure for things like nuclear power stations and coal mines. In future it would be much better to have a shortened form of public inquiry with time limits.

I shall now turn to area of unhappiness No. 2. Before we are confident about passing the motion, we should ask the Government if they have confidence in Eurotunnel. Eurotunnel was the Government's selection as the group to be given what is, in effect, a quasi-monopoly of one form of cross-Channel transport. However, the consortium is in a different shape today from the shape that it was in when it originated. The Eurotunnel consortium has turned out to be an unhappy ship. It is already on its third captain, or rather chairman, and a distinguished journalist, Mr. Kenneth Fleet, recently described it as rudderless, leaderless and penniless.

Many executives and directors have jumped ship or been thrown overboard. The first chairman of the Eurotunnel consortium, Sir Nicholas Henderson, has written a most illuminating book, "Channels and Tunnels", which has given us all an insight into the boardroom rows at Eurotunnel. It refers to construction companies shouting at each other across the table, directors who thought that their only function was to carp, and bankers who fell out with one another.

To judge from Sir Nicholas Henderson's revelations, he simply could not wait to step down from the chairmanship. He was succeeded by Lord Pennock, who seemed to have the Midas touch in reverse when it came to raising money or influencing the public. Then we had an attempted coup on the chairmanship from Sir Nigel Broackes, followed by Sir Nigel's noisy exit, accompanied by one or two others, such as the deputy chief executive, Michael Julian. Then, after pressure from the Bank of England, we had Lord Pennock's departure. He was criticised for being a part-timer, but he was replaced by Mr. Alastair Morton, presumably another part-timer, as he has retained his chairmanship of a well-known City bank, Guinness Peat and, indeed, his role as an industrial adviser to the Social Democratic party. The change to Mr. Morton from Lord Pennock was rather like replacing Uncle Podger with Flashman, because Mr. Morton was quick to get headlines such as,

> "Tunnel tough guy puts the squeeze on railways".

That brings me to my third area of concern—the latest news on the financing arrangements for the tunnel which seem to have two dimensions of public interest which need to be looked at before we pass the motion. I have referred many times to the unsatisfactory financial structure of the Channel tunnel, and I have prophesied that, instead of having a Franco-British Channel tunnel, we shall end up having a Franco-Arabian-Japanese Channel tunnel.

Can my hon. Friend the Minister give an assurance that the national quotas for investment will remain sacrosanct? Originally, it was promised that the investment in the Channel tunnel would be 40 per cent. British money, 40 per cent. French money and 20 per cent. from overseas. That is a subject to which we shall have to return a great deal in the new Parliament, but I am encouraged by the fact that two able business men, now parliamentary candidates, one for Dover and one for Canterbury—respectively, Mr. David Shaw and Mr. Julian Brazier—have been voluble in their criticisms of the financial non-viability of the Channel tunnel, not least in letters to the *Financial Times* and, indeed, in a pamphlet that one of them is in the process of writing. I am glad that in future I shall be reinforced, rather than be the lone voice criticising these extremely dodgy financial arrangements and financial structure, by two such able parliamentary representatives on the Conservative Benches.

Having asked about the national quotas, I should like to refer to the second and more important dimension of the financing, which might loosely be called the story of Flashman and the railways. You will recall from your reading of "Tom Brown's Schooldays", Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Flashman was a prefect and something of a bully, one of whose tricks was to hold small boys upside down in front of a fire, roasting them until their pocket money fell out of their trousers. A similar technique seems to have been employed by Mr. Alastair Morton to extract extra revenue from British Rail.

The story went something like this. Mr. Morton arrived at Eurotunnel and found, like everyone else who could read a balance sheet and prospectus, that the sums did not add up. He had to get some extra revenue from somewhere, so he decided that the best place to get extra money was the railways, although they had already agreed prices with Eurotunnel. Then the world watched with fascination as Mr. Morton made a series of pre-emptive announcements through the press to the effect that the tunnel would be cancelled by the end of last month unless British Rail was prepared to amend its original agreement and come up with more cash. Then we had a series of threats through the press, which were deeply resented, according to journalists' soundings of British Rail, and in the debate that took place on the front page of the newspapers, British Rail issued its statements on the financing. It said——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. These historical recollections and reminiscences are interesting, but they do not seem to have much to do with the motion before the House.

Mr. Aitken: They are extremely relevant, because there was an announcement only this morning of the brand new financing arrangements. My case, which I stress will not take me long to put forward, is simply to argue that the House should not pass the motion until it has full details of the financing arrangements, which have been given to the press but not to Parliament, and which deserves some scrutiny.

British Rail answered this curious debate in the newspapers. On 26 April an article in *The Sunday Times* stated:

> "BR, led by Sir Robert Reid, its chairman, is determined not to give in to Eurotunnel demands for higher tariffs and large guaranteed payments as a principal user . . . BR has been incensed by his"—

Mr. Morton's—

> "efforts to amend the terms of a provisional agreement signed last September. Morton wants BR to pay up to 80 per cent. of its projected tariff on a monthly basis in advance. BR interprets this as an attempt to gain public funding for the project by the back door and says it will not accept this."

Who intervened, and what changed British Rail's mind? *The Observer* last Sunday gave the story under the headline——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I remind the hon. Member that the Bill has been through all its stages in the House and is now before another place. Doubtless, if these matters are relevant, they will be considered in the other place at the appropriate time, but they do not seem to have much to do with the matter before the House.

Mr. Aitken: The matter before the House is whether the House should approve the carry-over motion. I argue that it should not approve the carry-over motion until we have received assurances about taxpayers' money which, as I shall reveal, may be being spent through a back door subsidy. I submit that that is highly relevant to whether we should allow the whole parliamentary process to be carried over to the next Parliament.

I was saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you will follow me closely for a moment, that, under the headline

> "Channel Tariff Solution in Sight",

The Observer last Sunday printed the story that British Rail was going to come up with more cash, and it has now done so. *The Observer*—this is a relevant quotation—said:

> "Despite the Government's public position of non-intervention in the affairs of Eurotunnel the Department of Transport is thought to have brought pressure to bear on BR to increase the level of advance payments the company was prepared to make."

If true, that is a dramatic and serious revelation. I have little doubt that the story in *The Observer* was correct. I

[Mr. Aitken]

should like to know from my hon. Friend the Minister whether Treasury as well as Transport Ministers were involved in this extraordinary effort to force more cash out of British Rail. I must ask my hon. Friend for a clear statement on what is going on.

If it is true that the Government, in the shape of Treasury and Transport Ministers, have been getting more money out of British Rail for Eurotunnel, contrary to BR's original commercial plan, the Government have broken their assurances to Parliament and are in danger of breaching the terms of the Anglo-French treaty, which specifically prohibits back-door subsidies with taxpayers' money. I am sure that you will be the first to agree, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that assurances are required.

We shall return again and again to this subject in the next Parliament. I think that the financial structure of Eurotunnel has been given a temporary reprieve. It is being kept alive on an artificial life support machine, now fed by the one kind of medicine that it was promised would never be used — a back-door subsidy of taxpayers' money via British Rail. Actually, in pure financial terms, I do not think that the subsidy is all that significant, as the *Financial Times* said this morning. But whether British Rail is giving a back-door subsidy or not, other storm clouds are gathering over Eurotunnel on the financial front.

I should like to ask my hon. Friend the Minister about the Rohan report, which was written by a French senator, Senator Rohan, and which has raised doubts on the French side about the financing of the Channel tunnel.

On 26 April, under the headline,

> "French raise new doubts on finance for Channel Tunnel",

a story in the *Sunday Telegraph* said:

> "Renewed doubts about the financial viability of the £5 billion Channel Tunnel project are raised in a confidential report commissioned for the French Government.
>
> The report, ordered by Mr. Chirac, the French Prime Minister . . . reaches damaging conclusions about the ability of private enterprise to fund the tunnel without the backing of public money.
>
> It advises that all construction work on the French side be delayed until a 'truly reliable financing arrangement has been obtained.'"

The story goes on to say that the French Government are coming to the conclusion that they will have [illegible] intervene and commit themselves to the project. I should like to know what is going on. Have the British Government seen the French report? What is the position of the French Government in the light of the report, since Mr. Chirac was here for talks recently? Where are we going in relation to French confidence and involvement in the financing of the Channel tunnel?

I have thrown one or two brickbats at the Government, but before I conclude I offer one bouquet. My hon. Friend the Minister of State, who has been guiding the Bill through the House and outside it, has been most courteous and considerate and a highly effective communicator in his efforts to deal with many of the micro problems of Kent, such as roads, the environment and so on. The Mitchell committee, which carries his name, has done a good job with the Kent county council and other local authorities and interests. I take this opportunity to pay a genuine tribute to him. I am sure that he would be the first to wish to share some of that credit with our hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), who, behind closed doors, has fought and won many a good fight for his constituents. The re-routing of the access road was the finest of his many achievements. Many people in Kent, including his constituents, are grateful to him.

Those successes are welcome, but they are solutions to the micro problems, while the macro problems of the Channel tunnel and Eurotunnel simply will not go away. The biggest and most insoluble problem of all is that, as a result of well-meaning misjudgments and muddled compromises, we have the wrong scheme at the wrong price, headed by the wrong consortium of businessmen who cannot raise the money. The local community and financial investment community have no confidence in it and the public could not care less about it and do not believe that it will happen. Only the Government plough serenely on, full of blind optimism. The political and parliamentary legs have been made to run far ahead of the financial head of sense and logic. The day of reckoning will come, but in the next Parliament. I look forward to being there at the kill.

9.26 pm

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): I would not like the carry-over motion to be agreed. I do not deny that carry-over motions have been accepted in the past, but we are against the content of the motion, not the procedure. It would be wrong to argue that we are against carry-over motions in principle, when this matter has had much opposition throughout this Parliament.

We heard from the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) about the problems of the financiers of the company and their failure to attract sufficient money for the project. I was reminded by the presence of the lone Liberal, who is now absent, that this project is very much like the economic policies of the SDP and the Liberals. If the financiers of this project were checked over by Coopers and Lybrand, we might find them as faulty as the policies trotted out today by those parties for the election campaign.

One thing which worries me and ought to worry all Tory Members is that the Government have been saying for the past few years, not just before the elections, that they believe in an entrepreneurial society based upon market forces; the philosophy of Friedman, that the Government do not intervene. One of the cries of Ministers and the Prime Minister in the course of the campaign to get the tunnel has been that no public money will be used. It now seems apparent, from what we have heard and read, that British Rail will be asked to provide funds to keep the project alive, to provide it with an oxygen cylinder.

Everybody who has studied the facts and figures knows that the Channel tunnel is starved of cash and cannot raise money. Unlike the hon. Member for Thanet South, I doubt whether any of the consortia that made the propositions that were put forward at the time of that intense lobbying through Members of Parliament, some of whom had not declared their interest on the Register at the time, could have come up with a project that would have attracted the necessary money. I suspect that when Chirac came over here to meet the Prime Minister, they had a few cosy words suggesting that they would find ways and means of providing the extra money.

This matter cannot be discussed purely on the basis of whether the Bill should be carried over into the next Parliament. It should be debated on the basis of whether this project should go forward at all. I remember the Labour party campaigning against the project because it wanted an inquiry. To some extent, that was a genuine proposition, but there was no inquiry. There will not be an inquiry if the Bill is carried over, but there should be. The project merited an inquiry.

You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like me, coming from the north of England, have been concerned. I am not putting you on the spot, but most Members of Parliament from the north of England would argue that the Channel tunnel has nothing for them. We all know that——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I must remind the hon. Gentleman that the House has dealt with the Bill at all its stages and has approved it. It is now in another place. We cannot have a re-run of the Second Reading debate that the hon. Gentleman thinks might have taken place.

Mr. Skinner: But the issue is whether this Parliament should approve this carry-over motion. This is not a guillotine motion. There is a difference. A debate on a guillotine motion is about whether we should provide a limited amount of time to discuss a Bill. This is about one Parliament, at its fag-end, handing over powers to another Parliament which will be comprised of a different number of Members on different sides of the House. We have a duty to use all possible means to try to prevent this carry-over motion being approved.

During the election campaign, my constituents will want to know what I did about the carry-over motion. They will want to know whether I opposed it. If I am to be guided by your intervention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would have to say that as a matter of fact, I did want to discuss the fact that British Rail was to be starved of finances for its midland line and the line used by you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and others. I would have to say that I was sorry, but I could not, because in this quaint old Parliament, in this quaint old club, we were not allowed to discuss the merits of the matter. My constituents will say, "You what, Dennis? You had to discuss the procedure?". I ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This is an important issue. It is apparent to those in the financial community that here is a so-called entrepreneurial project that is not getting off the ground. It is coming with the begging bowl to a Tory Government to be bailed out, and British Rail, with its starved finances, is to do that bailing out.

The number of ships built in the past eight years has fallen by 54 per cent., yet this Parliament will allow a carry-over motion to go through in order to wreck the shipping industry even further. Yet I am supposed to say, "Well, it is only a matter of procedure." If there is money in British Rail, it should go towards extra wages for those who work for British Rail. If there is any money over, it should be used to improve the lines up and down Britain.

In the past few weeks, the Government, in their helter-skelter dash towards the electorate, have been characterised by a number of U-turns. We have all heard them trotted out in the past few weeks. The nurses have been given the full award recommended by the review body—although even that is not enough. There was the U-turn about the nuclear dumps and other bits and bobs where the Government have suddenly found money out of the contingency fund in order to improve their chances in a few marginal seats.

The Government should stand by their faith and by the ideas for which they are supposed to argue throughout the rest of the Parliament. If people decide to use their money to build a tunnel they should be made to do so. If that entrepreneurial exercise is financially risky, those people should not say that they are not prepared to put their own money into it because it might fail and they might lose their money.

The hon. Member for Thanet, South knows all about failure in the business community. He had to get out. He was not able to go to the Government and say that breakfast television, which he was running, had not been able to get off the ground, and could they channel him some money from the BBC. That would have been ludicrous, although it might have been different if it had been a marginal seat.

The whole thing stinks. There is a smell about this project that anybody who has read about its finances would know. Ninety-six per cent. of the money has not been found. What other project in Britain would get past first base if it could only find 4 per cent. of the money needed? The developers have come with their begging bowl to the Government. I am not prepared to give the carry-over motion a smooth passage and I hope that others will join me in opposing it.

9.35 pm

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): We have heard two interesting speeches on the carry-over motion. I want to make two or three points clear. First, I would have preferred this motion not to be made, as it is quite unnecessary. If the Government were lucky enough to win the forthcoming election, they could quite easily have this or a similar motion after the election, as it would have precisely the same effect.

Mr. Skinner: They are frightened of losing.

Mr. Hughes: It makes no difference. If they lose, a different Government would look at it. I do not know why it is necessary to have the motion. In Kent, in the financial markets and in the House, the fact that there has not been a proper inquiry to test the viability and strategic importance of the scheme has caused difficulties. Had there been an inquiry, and had it recommended in favour of a tunnel, we might well have found that the project would have done better financially than it has.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) at one stage referred to the Labour party's policy as being, I think he said, "partly genuine". I do not know what he meant, but I assure him that it was not a partially genuine policy to have a public inquiry. When the next Labour Government come to power after the election, there will be an inquiry into the Channel tunnel scheme. The fact that the Bill will still be available in the new Session will make no difference to that commitment.

During the various stages of the Bill, we were told that it was an historic project, how many jobs would be involved and of the great enthusiasm of the Government for the scheme. There was a great fanfare of trumpets, both in France and here, at the signing ceremony. However, the Government have chosen to go to the country now rather than wait until October. The Bill could have finished all its stages in the Lords and the treaty been ratified, which would have been an occasion of great historic importance. During the election, therefore, I hope that we will not hear how the Government are committed to the Channel tunnel and how they have undying faith in it. If the Government were serious, instead of a continuation motion the Prime Minister would have been persuaded otherwise when she held her Chequers meeting on Sunday, and she would have put the election off until October.

I do not mind if the continuation motion is carried, because we all know that, should the Government be returned, they will have their way if they have a majority. If, as I suspect and believe, we are the Government, we will have our way and our policy. Therefore, the continuation motion is of no importance. It is purely technical and I do not know why the Government have bothered with it.

9.39 pm

Mr. David Mitchell: The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) raised a number of serious points. The first question he asked was why we are laying this motion and not choosing revival after an election. Looking back at precedent, in 1974 this Bill went through two Parliaments. On one occasion it was carried forward and on the other occasion it was revived. It was revived because Parliament was in recess at the time, and, therefore, the opportunity of carrying it forward was not available. In effect, we have followed precedent where it was available.

The hon. Gentleman referred also to a public inquiry. I simply remind him that a large number of petitioners have incurred a great deal of expenditure and have spent much time and trouble. There would still have been all those Select Committee stages to go through, even if there had been a public inquiry, and that would have meant all those people facing double expense and double time. I do not think that they would have thanked the hon. Gentleman for that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet South (Mr. Aitken) claimed that the Select Committee had been harried by the Whips. That is a disgraceful suggestion. I do not know of any member of the Select Committee of either House who would have allowed himself to be treated in that way. The House of Commons Select Committee met for 36 sitting days, had to deal with 4,845 petitions, made a 220-paragraph special report and made 70 amendments. The Lords Select Committee sat for 30 days and made 109 amendments, and its special report is awaited eagerly. In the final stages, one of the voluntary parliamentary agents, Mr. Beckett, said:

> "My Lords, we have been very impressed by your impartiality, your understanding and concern for our problems, especially on the matter of roads. I want to thank you on behalf of my petitioners for the kindness you have shown them in the last two months. Thank you, my Lords."

That does not sound like the sort of harrying that my hon. Friend is trying to portray, or misportray, to the House.

Mr. Aitken *rose*——

Mr. Mitchell: I have not finished with my hon. Friend yet.

Far more effective has been the persistent hand of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), who has quietly and effectively, behind the scenes, put the interests of his constituents in a way that has made a number of effective changes to what would otherwise have been the way in which matters have been dealt with.

Mr. Aitken: I did not refer to the House of Lords Select Committee in any way. I am well aware that there were no Whips operating in the Lords. So, although I totally share my hon. Friend's tribute to the Lords, his response has nothing to do with my speech.

Mr. Mitchell: The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) said that one of the things that worried him and ought to worry Conservative Members — we are most grateful for the solicitous approach of the hon. Gentleman about matters which worry Conservative Members—was that British Rail was going to be asked to supply certain funds to provide an oxygen supply to Eurotunnel. The usage agreement is a commercial deal. British Rail has acquired the right to 50 per cent. of the pathways through the tunnel and in return it will undertake to pay 65 per cent. of the tolls on Eurotunnel's traffic forecast. That is a straightforward commercial transaction.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South expressed a worry that Eurotunnel will not raise the large amount of money that it needs. Perhaps I should tell him that today Eurotunnel acquired £1,000 million-worth of loans from the European Investment bank. Before my hon. Friend starts another scare story, I should say that that money is in no way public money, funded by the public sector or by any Government. It is funded by the European Investment bank, backed by banks in the private sector, with no public commitment at all.

Mr. Skinner: It is interesting that the Minister said that the money is coming from European Investment bank and that it will be financed totally by banks. Will he take on board the fact that, when ventures of this sort are entered into by banks, there is a caveat that allows banks, where money has been lost and ventures have not been successful, to offset certain amounts of tax against liabilities of that sort? That would have the result that if, for example, this failed, the banks that have taken part in the exercise, just as with rescheduling debts, would be able to offset part of the losses against tax. That will mean that the taxpayer will be helping to finance that failed venture.

Mr. Mitchell: I know a red herring when I see one, and the hon. Gentleman will excuse me if I do not follow him down that pipeline.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South raised a series of questions on what he described as the Anglo-Iranian-Japanese financing. None of my hon. Friend's questions were relevant to the procedural motion before the House tonight. He asked for an assurance that there was no back-door subsidy for Eurotunnel from British Rail, and I give him that assurance.

Finally, I was fascinated by the complaint voiced by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South at the beginning of his speech about the slowness of the progress of this legislation. If I have allowed myself to be led into any delay at any time during the passage of this legislation, it is only because my hon. Friend played the role that ancient mariners always feared—of the wrecker on the shore who put the harbour lights in the wrong place to mislead the crew. We have not been misled on this occasion, and I commend the motion to the House.

Question put:—

The House proceeded to a Division:—

Mr. Michael Portillo and Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones were appointed Tellers for the Ayes, and Mr. Dennis Skinner was appointed Teller for the Noes, but no Member being willing to act as a Second Teller for the Noes, MR. SPEAKER *declared that the Ayes had it.*

Question accordingly agreed to.

Ordered,

That further proceedings on the Channel Tunnel Bill shall be suspended until the next Session of Parliament;

That if a Bill is presented to this House in the next Session in the same terms as those in which the Channel Tunnel Bill stood at the last stage of its proceeding in this House in this Session—

(*a*) the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first, second and third time; and

(*b*) the Standing Orders and practice of the House applicable to the Bill, so far as complied with or (in the case of the Standing Orders relating to Private Business) dispensed with in this Session or in the Session 1985-86, shall be deemed to have been complied with or (as the case may be) dispensed with in the next Session;

That this Order be a Standing Order of the House.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

DARTFORD-THURROCK CROSSING BILL

9.48 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): I beg to move,

That further proceedings on the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing Bill shall be suspended until the next Session of Parliament;

That if a Bill is presented in the next Session which is the same in every respect as the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing Bill when it was presented in this Session—

(*a*) the Bill shall be ordered to be printed and shall be deemed to have been read the first time; and

(*b*) the Standing Orders of the House applicable to the Bill, so far as complied with or dispensed with in this Session, shall be deemed to have been complied with or (as the case may be) dispensed with in the next Session;

That this Order be a Standing Order of the House.

If this motion is passed, the work that mainly concerns the authorisation of the new crossing will not have to be repeated as soon as the new Parliament meets.

Question put and agreed to.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BROADS BILL

Ordered,

That further proceedings on the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Bill be suspended until the next Session of Parliament;

That if a Bill is presented in the next Session in the same terms as those in which the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Bill stood when proceedings on it were suspended in this Session—

(*a*) the Bill so presented shall be ordered to be printed and shall be deemed to have been the first and second time, to have been reported from a Select Committee and to have been re-committed to a Standing Committee; and

(*b*) the Standing Orders and practice of the House applicable to that Bill, so far as complied with in this Session, shall be deemed to have been complied with in the next Session;

That this Order be a Standing Order of the House.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Roads and Pavements (Maintenance)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

9.49 pm

Mr. Colin Shepherd (Hertford): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for coming to reply to the debate. These may be almost the last moments of this Parliament, but the problem that I wish to explore will not go away because there is a change of one Parliament for another. It relates very much to the way in which the care and maintenance of highways is dealt with as a consequence of the Highways Act 1980 and earlier legislation.

The particular problem has been created by the arrangements contained in the 1980 Act, whereby district councils can exercise a right to do maintenance of unclassified roads in their territory. On that basis, a district council, in seeking to do its best, is not unnaturally perhaps inclined to develop a champagne taste but with only a beer income to satisfy it. Whereas we would all like authorities to have a champagne income, the problem of where it comes from cannot be put to one side. Authorities have to work within the constraints of what the rates will stand and what is granted by central Government from tax receipts.

In the present system, even though at professional officer-to-officer level there is co-operation, when there is a difference in political control, that co-operation may be undermined or lost by party politicking. That is highly unsatisfactory and cannot be good for the consumer. Similarly, the mechanism allowed for in schedule 7 to the Act is in theory a reasonable way of settling any dispute, but only on a professional level. An officer-to-officer dispute can reasonably be settled by the Secretary of State, acting in the role of professional arbiter rather than as a political person. A comparisón can be made with the Secretary of State for the Environment acting in the same capacity over planning appeals.

When the Secretary of State wears a party hat different from that of one of the parties to the dispute, a reasonable professional judgment may be rejected on a purely political basis. Of course, the rejection would come from the party that felt it had been done down. All this can be viewed as nothing but the normal cut and thrust of party politics, but at the bottom of it the consumer cannot and must not be forgotten.

I have in mind the elderly lady lying in the orthopaedic ward, having broken a hip by tripping over a displaced paving slab. She finds no consolation in the thought that it is normal party politicking or even in the possibility of financial compensation; she feels only acute frustration when told by the district council and the county council that it is the fault of the other. That unfortunate person is justified in her anger. She just wants someone to whom to complain and who will carry the can.

My hon. Friend will be aware that the problem exists in my part of the country between Hereford city council — a district council — and Hereford and Worcester county council. Hereford exercised its right in 1974— when both councils were formed — and ever since to carry out its own maintenance on unclassified roads and pavements within the city boundaries. I use this case as an example to underline my unhappiness with the present position and the way it can be exploited for the wrong reasons. My concern is not just that the roads and pavements of Hereford should be safe for constituents who walk, ride bicycles and drive motor cars—I do all three —but also that there should be full value for money. I have yet to meet a constituent who feels that he pays too little in rates.

There should also be accountability. The present system, as it is capable of being used when there is a difference of political control between the various bodies, does not provide that accountability. In Hereford, for example, no one can claim that the city council has been relatively disadvantaged in respect of similar authorities, such as Worcester, Kidderminster, Stourport, Bromsgrove and Redditch. Every year, for the past six years, Hereford has been, and is now, top of that league in terms of pounds per kilometre of unclassified roads to maintain. In 1986-87, the Wyre Forest estimate was £2,113 per kilometre, Bromsgrove £2,266, Redditch £1,814, with Hereford in the lead at £2,527.

If I read correctly the figures from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, they compare with the average for maintenance of other roads in the county—the category given by CIPFA is "other county roads"—of £1,427 per kilometre. It is also worth noting that Hereford and Worcester have one of the highest figures per kilometre per capita of roads to maintain in the country.

From my discussions with city and county professional officers, it would appear that the degree of mutual understanding and co-operation has been improving steadily of late, and I welcome that. If it will help to achieve the best value for money, so much the better. There appears to be a consensus that the backlog of problems is being reduced. I think that that comes about as a consequence of that co-operation, and it is encouraging. However, all of us who live or work around Hereford know that there are still areas where the pavements and roads are quite deplorable. Some have not been properly maintained in living memory.

On the political side, the position is different. Surely it is wrong for there to be a situation whereby a district council can demand expenditure without having to worry about the consequences of raising it. The expectations of electors are raised for political expediency, with local politicians secure in the knowledge that electorally they will not have to bear the brunt of the increased taxation if they succeed, and that they can pass on the blame if they fail. That is a marvellous position for them, but I am sure that it is unacceptable.

If there is to be accountability, and hence value, surely the lines of responsibility should be cleared away to obviate that problem. Either the county council should do the lot, on the basis that it is the rate precepting authority for that function, or the responsibility for action and funding should be passed over lock, stock and barrel to the district council. There should not be this curious position whereby we can have the one without the other.

In the former case, the professionals of the county councils would argue that they can deploy a level of expertise and scale of approach to the problem that is not available to district councils and that, because district council officers perforce must carry out many other functions as well, they cannot carry the specific expertise to achieve the most effective utilisation of financial resources.

In the latter case, the district council professionals would argue that there is local accountability and an improved opportunity for co-ordination with other district council responsibilities. They would argue that not having that function would jeopardise the viability of their technical service organisations and that the lines of communication for the public would be the shortest.

Both of those arguments have their attractions. However, the present arrangements seem to lead to the worst of all worlds, especially when one moves out of the realm of the professional and into the political.

My hon. Friend will have the vast experience of the Department of Transport at his fingertips and will have access to a far wider scope of examples and experience than I have. The problem is exercising both the Association of County Councils and the Association of District Councils. I should be grateful for any advice or evidence that my hon. Friend can give me that would point to a size of district council above which perhaps the economies of scale and the facility and expertise of local knowledge and organisations would come together in harmony and achieve palpable value for money without giving rise to this split personality.

I also believe that the Audit Commission is doing a special study on the matter. Can my hon. Friend tell the House when he expects it to publish its findings?

It being Ten o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without question put.

Motion made, and Question again proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Mr. Shepherd: The Audit Commission report will give valuable pointers as to how the problems may be resolved and, indeed, when we may expect to know positively whether or not we are getting full value for money.

As I said earlier, I am anxious that there should be full visible accountability and full auditable value, and the sooner the better. We are not necessarily best served by the present arrangements.

10.1 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd) for raising this issue. I wish to pay more than the usual tribute to him, because he has raised an issue which is not the common currency of Parliament, but which, as he put his finger on it, raises the questions of effectiveness and visible accountability.

My hon. Friend has not gone in for press-release politics. For all I know, he may not have put out a press release on this in the past. Instead, he has taken the matter up with the city and county officers and tried to bring them together; with the Audit Commission and put forward his own view for its consideration; in parliamentary questions; and in letters to the Department of Transport. No constituency could ask its Member to do more on this type of issue, which may not have the glamour of wet-fish politics—hitting one's opponent over the head with a wet fish just to wait for him to hit back. He has raised an issue which, sadly, has not attracted the attention of the alliance parties tonight and he has made the case for clearing up what appears to be unclear responsibility over the function and effectiveness of spending, and who should determine the outcome of a dispute between two authorities.

I intend to be fairly serious and detailed, because this debate will be of interest to county councils and district councils throughout the country. We recognise that the condition of roads and pavements is always a matter of great local concern and that there has been particular distress about the state of pavements in Hereford Maintenance of local roads is for local authorities, but we in the Government attach high priority to maintenance and have given clear signals about priorities.

Our determination that the county council had not acted unreasonably did not imply any judgment about the state of the roads in Hereford or the efficiency with which the city council is carrying out their maintenance. That is primarily a matter for the city council and the county council to examine. I have no other powers to intervene or to terminate a district council's powers to maintain urban unclassified roads. I hope that Hereford city council and the county council will continue to make every effort to accommodate maintenance needs and resources. Both the city council and county council exist to serve the people.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport is the highway authority for motorways and all-purpose trunk roads. County councils act as his agents in non-metropolitan areas. Local authorities are responsible for the rest of the road network. Outside the metropolitan areas the county council is the highway authority for local roads. The county council may make arrangements under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 for a district council to act as its agent in respect of some or all its highway functions. Alternatively, district councils can carry out certain duties by claiming the right to maintain footpaths, bridleways and urban unclassified roads in its area under section 42 of the Highways Act 1980. I confirm my hon. Friend's explanation of the position. In such cases the county council remains the highway authority and is responsible for funding the maintenance work that is carried out by a district council. The county council may withhold payment until it is satisfied that the works are properly executed.

About two-thirds of the 333 district councils in England and Wales possess a section 101 agency for at least some highway functions, but arrangements vary greatly. In general, agents deal with the cyclic and routine tasks rather that with the major capital works. In contrast, only about 12 district councils have claimed the right under section 42 to maintain minor local roads. I hope my hon. Friend will understand that I shall not be able to give him the information on how that number varies, because only a small number of councils use section 42.

A district council which is claiming section 42 maintenance powers is required to submit a detailed estimate of costs to the county council each year. Under schedule 7 to the Highways Act 1980, the county council must not unreasonably withhold approval of the estimate. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has powers under section 7 to determine whether approval of a district council's maintenance estimate has been unreasonably withheld by a county council. He may also determine whether a particular road falls within the relevant powers, whether any maintenance works have been properly executed, and the liability of a county council to make a payment to a district council.

A highway authority is responsible for determining maintenance standards and, where work is delegated to agents, ensuring that standards are complied with and that

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

adequate funds are provided. I think that that makes it plain that there is unlikely to be a similar dispute when there is an agency agreement. The responsibility is tied to one pair of hands, and although people look to their agents for advice and professionalism the responsibility lies with one authority. District councils which are claiming section 42 maintenance powers are responsible for deciding standards, subject to funds being made available by the county council as the highway authority. The House will understand how Hereford city council and Hereford county council have fallen into disagreement in the past.

Highway maintenance standards should reflect a range of factors, including engineering judgment, availability of resources and value for money. Standards for routine repairs for national roads, for which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is the highway authority, are laid down in the Department's code of practice for routine maintenance. Standards for local roads are a matter for local highway authorities.

In 1983 the local authority associations published a code of good practice for highway maintenance. That recommended standards and warning levels, while acknowledging the need for flexibility to meet local conditions. The associations are currently reviewing their code, and the relationship between the local authorities' and the Department's code is being jointly considered.

We have continued to give high priority to maintaining the local road network. Public expenditure provision has been generous in recent years, with a 18 per cent. increase in 1987-88, most of which feeds into authorities' grant-related expenditure. There was a 15 per cent. increase in 1986-87, and earlier years' increases were well above inflation.

Local authorities must determine their own spending priorities. We hope that they will act in accordance with the increased provision and give highway maintenance high priority. The national increase in provision should enable authorities to halt the trend of deterioration that was revealed by the recent national road maintenance condition surveys. It should also allow authorities to start work on bridges that are overdue for repair or in need of upgrading.

The position in Hereford and Worcester, as I do not have to explain to my hon. Friend, is that the county council is the highway authority. It directly maintains most of the classified roads and all local roads outside the principal urban areas.

The county council has an agency with the city of Worcester covering all classes of county roads and agencies with three other district councils for the maintenance of unclassifed urban roads. Hereford city council declined a formal agency agreement. Instead, it claimed the right, under section 42 of the Highways Act, 1980 to maintain urban unclassified roads.

The Government have increased Hereford and Worcester county council's grant-related expenditure for highway maintenance by 30 per cent. between 1985-86 and 1987-88. Spending priorities are a matter for the authority to decide. In recent years the county council has chosen to spend below grant-related expenditure.

Part of the county council's highway maintenance expenditure is allocated to Hereford city council for the maintenance of its urban unclassified roads. I understand that there was a significant increase in the funds made available between 1985-86 and 1986-87. However, I am aware that the allocations were substantially lower than the estimates for those years submitted by Hereford city council. I regret that I do not have the figures for 1986-87.

Hereford city council has consistently claimed that the funding provided by the county council for unclassified roads in the city is markedly insufficient. As my hon. Friend said, the failure on the part of both sides to agree resulted in the city council asking my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport to determine whether the county council had unreasonably withheld approval of the city council's maintenance estimates for 1985-86 and 1986-87.

The city council argued that once it had claimed the right to maintain its urban unclassified roads the county council was under an obligation to meet the reasonable costs, irrespective of the county's spending plans. It said that "reasonableness" should be judged in the context of the condition of the city's roads. The city council argued that its roads were heavily trafficked and in an unacceptable condition.

In response, the county council argued that the city council was adopting standards that were unachievable in the present economic climate. The county council said that it had set its standards in the context of the national codes of practice and that Hereford city had consistently received the highest allocation per kilometre, or per mile if that is an appropriate standard for my hon. Friend, of all districts in the county. Most important, the county did not accept that the city council was failing in its statutory duty to maintain the highway.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State concluded that the county council had had regard to the relevant considerations and had not acted unreasonably. He took the view that the county council, as highway authority and provider of funds, could reasonably weigh maintenance standards and priorities against the available finance and, if necessary, reduce the city council's estimate in the light of that.

I appreciate that the points I have made concerning our determination that the county council had not acted unreasonably does not imply a judgment about the state of the roads in Hereford. My hon. Friend has rightly concentrated attention on questioning how one can have visible accountability and determine that the system is effective and that roads are effectively maintained. The Hereford case raises broader issues of the optimum arrangements for the maintenance of local roads. My right hon. Friend and I have both said that the Audit Commission is currently undertaking a special study of highway maintenance including agency and section 42 arrangements. The commission expects to publish its interim report dealing with this matter in late summer. That answers one of my hon. Friend's questions.

I am certain that the commission's findings will help local authorities and their auditors to examine and improve their efficiency. I know that many hon. Members would like to pay tribute to the work of the Audit Commission on this and other matters. The solicitor who recently transferred from the borough of Greenwich to the Audit Commission will add to its professionalism. The commission has a tradition of recruiting people who know their job and can work with local authorities to produce useful reports.

I look forward to receiving the commission's report. The Government will consider the role of district councils with regard to highway maintenance as a result of that report. I believe that my hon. Friend would agree that it is premature to reach any conclusions on agency and section 42 powers while the Audit Commission study is still under way.

I hope that my answer in this relatively short debate is helpful. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising a matter that is clearly of concern at least to the 12 district councils that use section 42 powers. I suspect that it will also be of interest to the two thirds of the district councils which have an agency role with the local county council highway authority. It is the kind of matter that is best dealt with by a Member of Parliament who is responsible for a constituency rather then a multi-Member system, whereby people may not bother to pick up points of such a nature.

I hope that you will not judge me out of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I turn my remarks rather more to you. I came to the House in 1975 when you had already served for 11 years. It will be accepted on both sides of the House that it has been an honour to serve with you as a colleague, as a Minister and as Deputy Speaker. There are relatively few countries in which someone can move from being a teacher to being an Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, as you did, followed by years of distinguished service in the Department of the Environment.

Speaking for hon. Members who sit below the Gangway on the Front Benches, as well as for those who sit on ministerial Benches and on the Opposition Front Bench, may I say that your presence in the Chair has led to rather better behaviour, rather better debates and a great deal more affection for the occupant of the Chair than we could say has occurred in years past, although I do not wish to cast any reflection on Mr. Speaker or your fellow Deputy Speakers. You are held in great affection, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the leaders of all parties,. There are many who cannot be here this evening but who would like to join me in wishing you a happy retirement and the hope that your memories of this place will be as good as our memories of you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): I thank the Minister for his kind remarks. It has been a great privilege and honour to serve the House. I have been particularly fortunate in having been a Minister and then a Deputy Speaker. As Deputy Speaker, I have enjoyed my service in the House. I have listened to a great number of speeches to which I would not otherwise have listened. It has been interesting. It is a great honour to sit in the Chair. Labels no longer matter. Every right hon. and hon. Member is an individual and personality. This is a moving occasion. I am grateful for what the Minister said. I am privileged to have served this honourable House. I have grown more proud of the House as the years have gone by.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at seventeen minutes past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 14 May 1987

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON UNDERGROUND (GOODGE STREET) BILL *[Lords]*

Ordered,

That in the case of the London Underground (Goodge Street) Bill *[Lords]*, Standing Order 205 (Notice of third reading) be suspended and that the Bill be now read the third time. — *[The Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed, without amendment.

Oral Answers to Questions

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast (Development)

2. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the proposed public spending commitment to develop the city centre of Belfast.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Richard Needham): Although a complete picture is not available of public spending commitment in Belfast city centre, I can say that Government policy is to concentrate on building up the private sector through providing urban development grant and public sector infrastructure improvements. This policy has led to private sector investment of £90 million in the last three years, with a further £80 million already committed. The cost to the Government urban development grant in the last three years has been £14 million, and a further £16 million is currently on offer.

Mr. Baldry: Are not the very exciting potential new shopping and other developments in the centre of Belfast yet further evidence of the determination of everyone in Britain to see Belfast flourish as a European city? Will my hon. Friend make arrangements early in the next Parliament to organise an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall showing the proposed new developments in Belfast? I suspect that many hon. Members would be very excited if they also could see what is proposed for that city.

Mr. Needham: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for his comments. Of course, I shall have to ask the electors of Wiltshire, North to ensure that those arrangements can be made early in the next Parliament. On current form, I think that they may accede to his request.

My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The regeneration of Belfast is going ahead despite the problems there, which we all know about. The people of Belfast are showing just how determined they are to live ordinary normal lives, and there is a great show of new development, new plans and new progress, which, I think, gives hope for the future.

Security

3. **Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will make a statement on the latest security situation in the Province.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): Since I answered questions in the House on 9 April, 22 people have died as a result of the security situation. They included Sir Maurice and Lady Gibson, four policemen, and one member of the UDR. The figures also include eight terrorists, shot in an attack on Loughgall RUC station, and one person in Belfast believed to have been killed while carrying explosives. Since the beginning of the year a total of 154 people have been charged with serious offences; 88 weapons, 3,660 rounds of ammunition and 6,048 lb of explosives have been recovered in Northern Ireland.

I also understand that since 9 April the Garda Siochana has recovered some 1,360 lb of explosives and 1,000 rounds of ammunition, as well as certain weapons and miscellaneous equipment.

Mr. Latham: Following that sombre statement, may I ask my right hon. Friend whether he saw on television last night the deplorable sight of masked gunmen at funerals on both sides of the border? Will he confirm that whoever stands at the Dispatch box as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in a month's time will be wholly committed to an unrelenting fight against terrorism in Northern Ireland?

Mr. King: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his comments. It is my firm conviction that the sights that caused him such offence caused equal offence to the overwhelming majority of people in the island of Ireland. The events of the past few days have brought out very clearly the condemnation throughout Ireland, both north and south of the border, of the men of violence — whether it be from the Nationalist community, in the forthright statements of the hon. Members for Foyle (Mr. Hume) and for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon), from the Church or from the Foreign Minister of the Irish Republic. It is symbolic that most of their activities now take the shape of funerals, whether they be of their victims or of their own perpetrators of violence.

Mr. Hume: Does the Secretary of state agree that when lives, no matter whose lives they are, are lost in Northern Ireland it is particularly distasteful that there are always those who will gloat over the loss of life and see death as some sort of victory? Does he agree also that it is particularly distasteful when politicians do so, because that only feeds the bitternesses and the hatreds that ensure that death will occur in the future? Does the Secretary of State further agree that the most powerful statement in the past 12 months was made at the weekend by Mrs. McCartan, the mother of an innocent 17-year-old who was the victim of a sectarian murder, when she shouted. "Stop," and appealed to all sides to stop the killing?

Mr. King: I well understand the feeling with which the hon. Gentleman comments, particularly as he has been the victim in the past week of mindless and most unpleasant violence, directed against him and his family. The whole House respects the courage with which he discharges his responsibilities against very evil men indeed.

The tragedies of the terrorist outrages, which confirm the terrorists' ability to kill—there is no question of their ability to commit such outrages—and the whole pointlessness of it, which has been brought out clearly by others, not least by Bishop Cahal Daly and Mr. Lenihan, demonstrate that, whatever the cause they espouse, the use of violence advances that cause not one iota but is counter-productive.

Sir Adam Butler: May I first congratulate the security forces on their recent successes? They have had a very difficult time, particularly in recent months. Therefore, one or two of their recent actions are highly commendable. My right hon. Friend referred also to the achievements by the Garda. I wonder whether he can say anything further about the development of cross-border co-operation between the security forces? He will recollect that, shortly after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, I stressed that the agreement would commend itself to Unionists if cross-border security improved. That point remains as valid today as it was then. There can be no doubt that, without the defeat of terrorism, without the ending of conflict and bloodshed, and without lifting from the people of the Province fear and the sense of insecurity, the problems of Northern Ireland cannot be solved.

Mr. King: Before answering that question, may I add my personal regret that I fear that this may be the last time that my right hon. Friend will make a contribution in this House. I know what a loss so many hon. Members feel that in future we shall not have the pleasure and the value of his contributions. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]

I am grateful for my right hon. Friend's comments about the efforts of the security forces. In view of fairly wild speculation, I think that I should make it quite clear that the events of last Friday night were the consequence of a number of steps that we have been taking to seek to improve the security of police stations against a number of attacks, particularly attacks against police stations of a rather "softer" nature, and that what was prevented was quite clearly a deliberate attempt to murder two policemen. It was a very determined attack indeed. We were extremely fortunate not to suffer serious casulties among the security forces. I recognise that they managed to resist very effectively, but there is no question but that the responsibility for the casualties lies exclusively with the IRA, which launched such a futile but dangerous attack.

As for co-operation with the Garda Siochana, others may have seen last night the events to which my right hon. Friend referred—the incidents surrounding the funeral of one of the terrorists and the hatred that the IRA also shows to the Garda Siochana. It was for that reason that my right hon. Friend will have noted that I included those statistics in my original answer. They show something of the contribution that the Garda Siochana is seeking to make to defeating what is an evil, whether it is north or south of the border.

Mr. Bell: We on this side of the House associate ourselves with the remarks of the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham). We who aspire to stand at the Government Dispatch Box after the election will follow the policy of Her Majesty's Government in giving full support to the security forces in Northern Ireland. We recognise that we face a long, long haul to combat the hatred, animosity and bitterness which are converted into a sad litany of death and destruction, and we support the Government in their recent measures. We, too, regret the fact that 22 people have died and others have been injured, but we welcome the fact that those responsible have been charged and will stand trial. It is right at this stage in our proceedings to associate the Opposition with the Government in their security policy on Northern Ireland.

Mr. Speaker: Question No. 4—Mr. Brown.

Mr. King: Perhaps I might just answer the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell), Sir.

I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his comments and for the resolute position that he and his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) have taken in support of the fight against terrorism. This is an appropriate moment at which to make that absolutely clear.

I add that the statistics for the year, which underline the futility of terrorism, include a number of INLA members accused of shooting each other, as well as the terrorists who lost their lives in recent events. That shows what a tragedy of death and destruction terrorism brings with it. The House will also be aware that, tragically, in the attack launched by the IRA at Loughgall, an innocent passer by and his brother were caught up in the tumult. One of them died and the other was very seriously injured. The whole House will share my concern and distress at the death and injuries suffered and at the tragedy suffered by the men's family, which was entirely the result of this appalling IRA attack.

Mr. Speaker: I apologise to the Secretary of State. We shall return to this matter again on question No. 7.

AOR1 (Completion Date)

4. **Mr. Nicholas Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the latest forecast cost to completion of the AOR1 vessel and how this compares with Harland and Wolff's original bid; what is the latest profit forecast for the contract and how this compares with the forecast assumed at the time it was awarded; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Viggers): I regret that I cannot provide details of either the original projections of cost and profit in respect of the AOR veseel or latest projections, as this is commercially confidential information.

Mr. Brown: That answer will not come as much comfort to the people of Tyneside, and I am sure that the Minister understands why. Two thousand shipyard workers on Tyneside lost their jobs because the Government chose to award the contract to Harland and Wolff, with an assurance that there was to be no public subsidy. Can the Minister repeat that assurance and, in particular, can he assure us that the Northern Ireland Office and the Government will not pay the interest on bringing the profits forward on AOR1, but that that interest will be paid from Harland and Wolff's own resources?

Mr. Viggers: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's interest and the support for private enterprise reflected in his remarks. The commercially based assumptions made by Harland and Wolff in arriving at the tender price were reviewed by independent consultants, who confirmed that the tender was unsubsidised and comprehensively costed. The hon. Gentleman's repetition of his question adds no merit to it.

Belfast (Retail Premises)

6. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the total area of retail premises in the city of Belfast which has been the subject of planning applications dealt with by his Department in the last three-year period for which figures are available.

Mr. Needham: The figures for total area of retail premises are not available, but since 1980 nearly 700 planning applications for retail development in the city of Belfast have been approved. That includes the recent approvals in Belfast city centre for the Castlecourt shopping complex of 345,000 sq ft, and one of 105,000 sq ft in Castle place. The Castlecourt development due to start later this year involves investment of £60 million, with Government backing of £10 million-worth of urban development grant. The people of Belfast are at last getting the range and quality of shopping that they deserve.

Mr. Yeo: Further to one of my hon. Friend's earlier answers, is he aware that many of his hon. Friends—and, indeed, many other hon. Members—look forward to his re-election to the House? Is he further aware that the city of Belfast offers outstanding investment and development opportunities and that many investors and developers from the mainland are very favourably surprised when they learn of the returns that they can achieve by investing in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Needham: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's good wishes and I shall make sure that they are properly passed on to the electors of Wiltshire, North. He is absolutely right that there are tremendous investment prospects for Belfast which are not always understood by people on this side of the water. I am grateful to him for bringing that to the attention of the House, because the more we can get people to come to Belfast to see the conditions there for themselves, the more they will be pleasantly surprised and be prepared to put their money where their mouths are and develop the city in a way which the people deserve and which will benefit their shareholders' returns.

Mr. Archer: The Minister will understand if I do not join the hon. Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo) in extending good wishes to him.

Mr. Tom King: The Labour party has no interest in north Wiltshire.

Mr. Archer: We have an interest in the total outcome. May we be permitted to join in the well-deserved congratulations to Belfast on its determination to return to normality? Is it not true that it is a city where affluence and squalor exist side by side? Is there not a need to ensure that all citizens share in its success? How many successful planning applications have there been in the Shankhill in the past three years, and how many in the Falls?

Mr. Needham: I cannot give the right hon. and learned Gentleman the exact figures, but I am wholly aware of the need to ensure that the prosperity is spread throughout Belfast. The Brookfield development under Father Myles Kavanagh has been a major success in the Andersonstown area and we are supporting major investment in the Beltex development in the Ardoyne. I can assure him that the Government will do everything in their power now and from June to assist in developments in the deprived areas of Belfast. The right hon. and learned Gentleman will be aware of the Belfast city initiative and the fact that city action teams have been set up specifically to assist the poorer areas and to allow the communities to feel that they are involved in the development of the city. The Government accept that without that it would be more difficult to develop the city on behalf of everybody.

Security

7. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to improve cross-border security; and if he will make a statement.

10. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the most recent position on cross-border security.

11. **Sir John Farr** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on cross-border security co-operation.

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. Nicholas Scott): We are constantly seeking ways of enhancing security co-operation between ourselves and the Republic of Ireland and we aim to implement as quickly as possible the programme of measures under article 9*(a)* of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Security co-operation was one of the subjects discussed with representatives of the new Irish Government at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 22 April, and at the next meeting we shall be reviewing progress and discussing proposals for further developing co-operation. Recent events have further underlined the need to ensure that such co-operation is as close and effective as possible.

Mr. Bruinvels: As many of Leicester's sons are serving in Northern Ireland, may I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on their determination to improve security in Northern Ireland? Whether it is true that additional forces and troops have been sent there, I know not. Will my hon. Friend reassure all hon. Members that the co-operation and determination that have been shown by the Secretary of State are being reciprocated and reinforced by those on the other side of the border?

Mr. Scott: The foundations have been clearly laid for much improved security co-operation through consultation between the police forces and between Ministers. Indeed, there have already been manifestations of that improvement. On both sides of the border we look forward to enhancing that co-operation in the future.

Mr. Spencer: Does my hon. Friend agree that we shall get better security only through the activities of the Governments on either side of the border and through the full co-operation of the people living on each side, and that those who incite their followers not to co-operate are undermining their security?

Mr. Scott: That must be so. I hope that people throughout the island of Ireland will be increasingly aware of the futility of the actions in which the IRA is engaged. As the Tanaiste said in a debate in the Dail on Tuesday evening, the armed struggle is increasingly unacceptable to a majority of the Irish people. I hope that that will become increasingly clear and will manifest itself in support for the security forces north and south of the border.

Sir John Farr: Is my hon. Friend absolutely sure that the link between north and south is secure, by virtue of co-operation between the Garda in the south and the RUC in respect of cross-border car journeys? I am not asking my hon. Friend to refer to the tragedy recently when a distinguished member of the Northern Ireland judiciary was killed, but very often travellers from the south entering the Province are escorted by the Garda as far as the border and, as soon as they get over the border, there is no sign of the RUC. Will he look at this again and make sure that not only is there a suitable link-up, but that there is a safe and secure link-up between the two forces?

Mr. Scott: As I said in the debate on security last week, these are operational matters for the RUC. It has to be careful that it does not establish some pattern of movement across the border, particularly on well-traversed routes, which may lay it and members of the RUC open to attack by terrorists. I am absolutely sure that this is being tackled by the Chief Constable and by the RUC command in a flexible and intelligent way, and in a way that reflects close co-operation between the Garda and the RUC.

Mr. Stephen Ross: Does the Minister agree that when distinguished persons are travelling by road between Dublin and Belfast they should not be abandoned in no man's land, whether they are travelling by road or by rail? I refer particularly to rail journeys, because the same thing happens with them at present.

Mr. Scott: I know that the hon. Gentleman has another question on the Order Paper. In case that question is not reached, may I say how much we have admired his contributions to discussions on the subject. He will be sadly missed, personally if not politically, in the next Parliament. We wish him well with whatever he turns his hand to when he leaves the House. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Of course we recognise the importance of the matter that the hon. Gentleman has raised. Co-operation between the railways, both in the Republic and in the north, and the security forces, is very close, as is co-operation on the security of road links between the two parts of the island.

Ms. Clare Short: Will the Minister confirm that his military advice is that there is no military solution to the security problem in Northern Ireland and that gloating over the deaths of eight alleged terrorists and the killing of an innocent man is as likely to inflame the situation as to improve it? What plans has he other than pure security measures to improve life in Northern Ireland to reduce the likelihood that young men will go off and join military organisations?

Mr. Scott: The hon. Lady has not heard any gloating from me, from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland or from our colleagues. I regret every life that is lost in Northern Ireland, not least because of the futility of it when there are constitutional and political routes open for people to pursue, whatever cause they espouse within the island of Ireland. It is absolutely futile, and nobody gloats when young people lose their lives. I understand that, if we are to have a solution to the problems of Northern Ireland, the relationship within Ireland and between Britain and Ireland, politics, economics and security all have their role to play. In Northern Ireland the Government are committed to tackling each of those problems as constructively as possible. However, as long as the IRA carries on its vicious and sustained campaign, security will have to play an important part.

Mr. McNamara: I wonder whether the Minister of State can help us, because, in some of the briefings from his Department, and possibly from the Ministry of Defence, we were given to understand that those eight men had been under supervision, that the farmhouse where they collected their high explosives had been watched for some time, that there was only one access road into the village where they tried to carry out their most evil crime and that they were surrounded by the security forces. In those circumstances, why was it not possible to pick up the men beforehand? Why, if they were surrounded in the circumstances in which we have read in the newspapers —if those reports are accurate—was not a megaphone, a searchlight or something of that nature used to give them an opportunity to surrender?

Mr. Scott: I shall say two things to the hon. Gentleman. First, he should not believe all that he reads in the newspapers, nor should he identify, as he thinks, the source of what appears in the newspaper. Secondly, this whole incident will be the subject of a detailed investigation by the Royal Ulster Constabulary and, as in any incident in Northern Ireland in which people lose their lives, the papers will be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions. I advise the hon. Gentleman to await the outcome of those inquiries.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: Turning to the main subject of the question, are the two Governments any closer to marking out a zone on both sides of the common frontier in which the security forces of the two countries can operate freely and in partnership? Where there may be deficiencies in material, technique or training on the other side of the border, are Her Majesty's Government ready to give whatever assistance may be asked of them?

Mr. Scott: The answer to the second part of my hon. Friend's question is yes. Discussions are held largely between the professionals, the policemen on both sides of the border, to seek to find ways in which they can co-operate and exchange the experience and skills of the two police forces. As necessary, they will be supported by officials and, indeed, by Ministers in due course. My hon. Friend's point about some sort of corridor along the border raises more fundamental questions about sovereignty that have not yet been raised in discussions between the two Governments.

Housing (Heating Costs)

9. **Mr. O'Brien** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has as to the cost in use of individual coal fires, as compared to the exising district heating schemes in the Sandy Row and lower Newtownards areas and the Sandy Row estate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: As the answer contains a number of figures, I shall with permission, Mr. Speaker, arrange for it to be published in the *Official Report*.

Mr. O'Brien: I am grateful to the Minister for that information. Has he read the report of a survey carried out by people attached to the University of Ulster? That report was published last October on this very subject and shows comparisons between district heating schemes and individual units in the various estates. If he has read the report, will he consider the issue of value for money as between the comparable solid fuel district heating scheme and the individual units? Will he also consider the value to the tenants and the savings to the Housing Executive, because the card procedure for purchasing heat before it is used is economic and of value to everyone concerned?

Mr. Needham: Due to the overwhelming desire of the House to hear the figures, I shall give them now rather than circulate them. The comparative costs at Sandy Row are £8·30 for district heating and £5·06 for solid fuel heating. The figures for the Newtownards road are £8·40 compared to £6·08 and at Cromac £9·87 compared to £8·17. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman will understand that all these factors will be taken into account before we come to a decision.

Horse Markets

12. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to the number of horse markets in the Province; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: No regular weekly or monthly horse sales exist. Sales are occasional in nature, usually being at local fairs or sales on owners' premises.

Mr. Greenway: Does my hon. Friend agree that there is no horse like an Irish horse for racing, riding, driving or for any other purpose? Does he further agree that though the sales methods for horses in Ireland are somewhat different from those in the rest of the United Kingdom, the Farm Animal Welfare Council's recommended standard should be applied at those sales, and that horses should be given treatment equal to that given to cattle?

Mr. Viggers: These matters are under the vigilant eye of my noble Friend Lord Lyell. I have no doubt that he will take such action as is necessary should cases of abuse occur. However, no cases of abuse of any kind have been reported from any source and we are currently satisfied with the regulations.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Stephen Ross.

Mr. Stephen Ross: Pass, Mr. Speaker.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Other hon. Members may wish to take part.

Mr. Ross: No. 14, Mr. Speaker.

Security

14. **Mr. Stephen Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on cross-border security co-operation between the United Kingdom and Eire.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer that I gave to a question by my hon. Friend, the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) earlier today.

Mr. Ross: I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for his kind remarks about me and I wish him well in his continuing job in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Scott: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Dickens: Does the Minister appreciate that when we have successful security operations, such as the most recent, or when terrorists are apprehended, it is often found that the criminals are among those who escaped from the Maze prison? What recent steps have been taken to ensure that we never have a repetition of terrorists escaping from the Maze prison and then being able to kill people as a consequence?

Mr. Scott: It would be a bold Minister who stood at the Dispatch Box and guaranteed the total security of any prison establishment anywhere in the United Kingdom. Following the escape from the Maze in 1983, Sir James Hennessy produced a report with many recommendations, which have been implemented progressively. There is no doubt that security has been substantially enhanced at Her Majesty's prison Maze and the lessons have been applied to other prisons in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Cash: With reference to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) on discrimination against Catholics——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is wide of the question.

Mr. Cash: With reference to this question, does my hon. Friend agree that as we come up to the general election this is a time for requesting those who take part in political activities in Northern Ireland, on cross-border security or other related matters, to ensure that there is no unnecessary hostility on the basis of religious bigotry? This is a time for people to consider the political situation, not racial or religious prejudice.

Mr. Scott: I endorse what my hon. Friend implies in his question. I assure him that within the security forces in Northern Ireland, whether in recruitment, promotion or training procedures, there is no discrimination whatsoever against Catholics. Steps have been taken to ensure that that is so.

Mr. Stanbrook: Further to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens), is it not a fact that recidivism among those convicted of terrorist offences is vey high? Therefore, should we not consider introducing powers to enable the courts of Northern Ireland to sentence offenders convicted of terrorist crimes to imprisonment for the duration of the emergency?

Mr. Scott: We are conducting a study at the moment into the degree of re-involvement in terrorist activity of those who have been convicted of terrorist-type offences. There is some superficial evidence that re-involvement exists to a certain extent, but, unless my hon. Friend has evidence to show that it is particularly high, I advise him not to jump to too many conclusions on that front. I would be most reluctant to consider a procedure which moved away from treating those who have been convicted of terrorist-type offences as criminals within Northern Ireland and dealing with them according to the law. The IRA and its supporters whould love us to treat those convicted of terrorist-type offences as some sort of prisoners of war. We will not do that. They are criminals.

As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said, a crime is a crime is a crime, and those who commit those crimes should be treated accordingly.

Public Employment

16. **Mr. Hume** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration he has given to the relocation of public employment in areas of high unemployment in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Scott: Policy on Government office accommodation is under review at present. The review is considering the most appropriate siting of Government offices, taking account of the need to locate them where they can most effectively provide services to the public.

Mr. Hume: Does the Minister agree that if the Government are to be taken seriously about their intention to promote fair employment in Northern Ireland, the one area under their control where they can make a major contribution is the redistribution of public employment? With new technology it is no longer necessary to centralise such employment. Will he explain why, with such a simple matter as training centres, only limited skills are available in areas of highest unemployment, such as Strabane in my constituency?

Mr. Scott: Over 40 per cent. of non-industrial civil servants in Northern Ireland are located outside the Belfast area. Many other major public sector bodies are sited in various parts of Northern Ireland. The health and education boards and other bodies are, by definition, scattered round Northern Ireland and provide employment in the public sector.

We are taking a careful look at the Civil Service deployment pattern. Any move will have to be measured against the service to the public and the efficiency of the public service as a whole. We must bear those two things in mind when we come to a conclusion.

On the question of training centres and training within the further education sector, so far as possible we shall seek to ensure that services are demand-led. Where there is a demand for services they should be provided, consistent with economy and efficiency. We shall examine both those aspects in the light of what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Mr. Heddle: Does my hon. Friend agree that the way to combat high unemployment in the Province is to reduce terrorism, because the only way to reduce high unemployment is through private sector investment? Does he agree that the private sector will not invest until the threat of terrorism has been eliminated?

Mr. Scott: I endorse what my hon. Friend has said. The pattern of unemployment in west Belfast, in parts of Derry and Strabane and elsewhere reflects the IRA's hypocrisy when it complains about unemployment among Catholics in those towns and cities, yet we know that it has contributed more than any other single factor to that unemployment in Northern Ireland.

Intergovernmental Conference

17. **Mr. Bell** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the issues discussed at the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference.

Mr. Tom King: I last met Irish Ministers at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 22 April. We discussed security co-operation and measures aimed at promoting equality of opportunity in employment. Details are set out in the joint statement issued after the meeting, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful to the Secretary of State for that reply. At this stage in our parliamentary proceedings, may I say how much I appreciate the courtesy of the Secretary of State and his colleagues over the past two years when dealing with Northern Ireland matters? May I assure the Secretary of State that after 11 June, when my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) and I are standing at the Government Dispatch Box, he will receive the same courtesy from us?

Will the Secretary of State take note that as a future Labour Government we shall give full support to the Anglo-Irish Agreement? We reaffirm that commitment now and look forward to the first Intergovernmental Conference in the new Parliament.

Mr. King: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's opening remarks, although I did not particularly enjoy his second point. I believe that all elections in the early stages are founded on a fine degree of fantasy among Oppositions. The hon. Gentleman will find the reality at the hustings. After the election I look forward to the hon. Gentleman, in opposition, showing the same consistency in support of the Anglo-Irish Agreement as he has so far.

Mr. Gow: Has the Intergovernmental Conference addressed its attention to the question whether it is possible to govern one part of the United Kingdom differently from the rest of the United Kingdom, and differently from the way that it has been governed before, without the consent of a majority of those who are to be governed differently?

Mr. King: No, Sir. The government of any part of the United Kingdom is a matter for the United Kingdom Government and this Parliament. This is entirely our affair. There has been no change. I know that my hon. Friend holds a different view, but I maintain positively that there has been no change whatsoever in Ministers' responsibilities and that there has been no change in the sovereignty of the United Kingdom or its Parliament.

I respect the Government of the Republic of Ireland's views. I am interested in listening to their views and value them. The events of recent days—the evidence on the television screens—of the problems that the IRA poses for the Republic of Ireland, as well as for Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom, are clear enough confirmation of the very close identity of interest that we have in the defeat of terrorism.

Wages

18. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what number and proportion of workers in Northern Ireland were paid less in 1979 than the Council of Europe decency threshold; and what are the latest available figures for workers in this category.

Mr. Viggers: There is no such thing as a Council of Europe threshold for a minimum acceptable level of earnings.

Ms. Short: The Minister is absolutely wrong. The Council of Europe has set down a decency threshold, which is recommended right across Europe. In Britain it would represent £126 a week, or £2·40 an hour. In the whole of the United Kingdom 8·8 million people are paid less than that, and I understand that in Northern Ireland that proportion is much worse. Indeed, the incidence of low pay, as with unemployment, is much worse in Northern Ireland. I am disgusted that the Minister has nothing to say about this serious question.

Mr. Viggers: The hon. Lady is wrong. No such proposals have ever been endorsed by any member state, by the Council of Europe or by its governmental committee on the European social charter. If the hon. Lady wishes to put down any specific question on numbers she is, of course, at liberty to do so. However, first it will be necessary for her to win the seat of Birmingham, Ladywood, which, judged by current events, must be regarded as marginal.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Tim Yeo** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 May.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with Ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Yeo: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the extremely encouraging fall in unemployment announced this morning represents further evidence that her Government's policies of sharing the fruits of economic growth between cuts in income tax, cuts in public borrowing and cuts in interest rates, together with selective increases in public expenditure, are the right policies for Britain for the next five years?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that the figures are encouraging. They show that unemployment is on a downward trend. They also show that the number of jobs is rising, and that sound financial policies, private enterprise and incentive taxation are a winning combination.

Mr. Kinnock: When 750,000 people are on hospital waiting lists and some people have waited for more than four years for operations, is not the right hon. Lady's claim that the Health Service is safe in her hands a sick joke against sick people?

The Prime Minister: No. The right hon. Gentleman complains that waiting lists are too long. The fact is that Labour Governments have presided over *[Interruption.]* increases in waiting lists and Conservative Governments *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Labour Governments have presided over increases in the waiting lists, but Conservative Governments have cut them. Between 1964-70, under Labour, waiting lists increased by 85,000. Between 1974-79, under Labour, waiting lists increased by nearly 250,000. By contrast, between 1970 and 1974, under the Conservative Government, waiting lists fell by 31,000, and since 1979 the waiting lists have fallen by 70,000.

Mr. Kinnock: Both in terms of the numbers on waiting lists and in terms of the waiting time on waiting lists, the Prime Minister is misleading the House—*[Interruption.]* In both cases, after eight years in government, the figures under the Tory Government are 15 per cent. higher than they ever were under Labour Governments. Is it not obvious that if the right hon. Lady or any of her loved ones had to wait on a list for treatment under the National Health Service she would have a different view of the pain and anxiety suffered by those who do?

The Prime Minister: As I have shown, not with rhetoric, but with facts, Labour Governments have presided over increases in the waiting lists and Conservative Governments have cut them. The number of patients being treated under this Government has increased. There are almost 1 million more patients in hospital per year. Patient services have also increased. The number of heart bypass operations has tripled, perinatal mortality has been reduced by more than a third, the number of hip replacements has gone up by a quarter and the number of cataract operations has gone up by a half. That is our record.

Mr. Kinnock: When the Royal Colleges of Surgeons and Physicians, the Select Committee on Social Services and, indeed, all patients who use the Service and the people who work in it say that the Prime Minister has never made the proper commitment to the National Health Service that is required by modern needs, is it not obvious that there is not so much a shortage of money as an absence of morality on the Prime Minister's part?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman talks about a shortage of money. The day that I went into 10 Downing street, £7·75 billion a year was allocated to the Health Service. Today that figure is £21 billion a year, giving a very much better Health Service and a very much better standard of care.

Sir Ian Percival: Is my right hon. Friend aware that, however hard the Leader of the Opposition may try, and whatever they are praying for in Moscow in the next few weeks, millions of people in the United Kingdom will be praying that she will be given the health and strength to continue to give the magnificent lead that she has given to us all for eight solid years? Whatever hon. and right hon. Members opposite may say, that, and her personal input of ideals, ideas and effort, and those of her Governments and the people of this country, have enabled the people of this country to regain their confidence, their self respect, a place in the world and the real prospect of a better future, provided that we return her to No. 10 Downing street four weeks today. God bless her.

The Prime Minister: I thank my right hon. and learned Friend and assure him that I have never felt fitter.

Q2. **Mr. Matthew Taylor** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Taylor: Is the Prime Minister aware that since 1979, full-time employment opportunities for young people have fallen by one third? Will she now reconsider, as a matter of urgency, the cuts in benefits for young people, and act to cancel the restrictions on accommodation and finding homes for young people, so that they have the independence to find work?

The Prime Minister: Unemployment among those under 25 years old fell by more than 80,000 in the year to January, and, in fact, the unemployment rate for under 25-year-olds in the United Kingdom is fortunately below the average for our major European competitors. Even so, it is too high, and the hon. Gentleman will be aware of the extensive measures taken under the youth training scheme and the new job training scheme to try to match training to jobs for which people cannot be found.

With regard to housing, perhaps the hon. Gentleman will wait until the manifesto comes out. There are still certain controls which are not conducive to finding private rented property.

Q3. **Dame Jill Knight** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Dame Jill Knight: Is my right hon. Friend aware that last Friday the Labour Opposition deliberately blocked a Bill that would have stopped very young children in our schools from being encouraged to grow up as homosexuals? Will she give an assurance to the House that, in the next Parliament, she will, in legislation, protect both children and the concept of the family?

The Prime Minister: I know of my hon. Friend's great concern for protecting family life, and I congratulate her on her promotion of the Bill to which she has referred. No one voted against it, and I think that it was a great pity that it did not complete its passage through the House. The Government supported her objectives. I hope that she will bring the Bill back before the House when she returns and that it will then go through both Houses.

Q4. **Mr. Buchan** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Buchan: Does the Prime Minister recall the appalling statement that was made by the Secretary of State for Employment on 12 February, when he said on "Newsnight":

"I lose no sleep about unemployment."?

On the eve of an election, the right hon. Lady having been Prime Minister for eight years, leaves us with 3 million unemployed, despite the figures having been fiddled 19 times. Will she come to my constituency and tell the 7,000 there who have become unemployed as a result of her activities over the past eight years that she endorses the statement of the Secretary of State for Employment?

The Prime Minister: I know of no such statement, and I wish to make that perfectly clear. As the hon. Gentleman has made an assertion, I hope that he will attempt to adduce chapter and verse, which I think he will find extremely difficult to do. Business produces new jobs, and it is a necessity to have an economic policy that produces thriving businesses, without overmanning or restrictive practices, that use the latest technology. We have steady economic growth, and that is good for future jobs.

Q5. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. and learned Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Spencer: As the hon. Member with the smallest majority, might I wish my right hon. Friend the best of luck? Is my right hon. Friend aware that, under her leadership, Leicester has become once more a great city of enterprise that is bursting to return three Tory Members?

The Prime Minister: I know that all my right hon. and hon. Friends wish my hon. and learned Friend well and hope that he will be asking a similar question shortly after the beginning of the new Session. I know Leicester well. It has always had varied industries and I congratulate it on the level of enterprise and on the increasing number of jobs that it is providing for its people.

Mr. Bidwell: In the coming election campaign, will the Prime Minister promise to disown any candidate who tries to stir up enmity between white and black people?

The Prime Minister: All those who are here for permanent settlement have the same rights and the same responsibilities, and we must continue to make that clear.

Q6. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Greenway: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is to the eternal credit of the teaching profession that so many of its members defied recent union pressure to strike and decided to put the education of children first? Has not a great deal of this to do with recent Government action, and has not the time come for the Government to put in hand radical measures to change the running of schools?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that parents are grateful to those dedicated teachers who have insisted on putting the children first throughout a time when others have gone on strike. Our new pay arrangements are designed to give just such teachers higher pay. When the manifesto appears, I hope that my hon. Friend will be pleased about it. It is designed to give greater choice, power and influence to parents in the education of their children.

Mr. Hume: When the Prime Minister told the House last week that the director of the security services had conducted an investigation into the allegations against MI5, she did not make it clear whether that investigation embraced allegations about Northern Ireland, such as infiltration of paramilitary organisations, the commission of murder and attempts to discredit public figures, including myself. Will she tell me whether the investigation included that, and will she also tell me the outcome of it? By the way, when she next speaks to the director, will she tell him that if he ever finds that forged bank account that is attributed to me I shall halve it with him.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman is aware that I made a very full statement last week and I have nothing to add to it.

Q7. **Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 May.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Sir Fergus Montgomery: Following the point that was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North

(Mr. Greenway), does my right hon. Friend agree that children also have rights, as well as teachers, and that children have been badly affected by the industrial action that has occurred in our schools in the past few months? That time will never be made up. Will she pay tribute to the good teachers who have refused to obey the dictates of their union bosses?

The Prime Minister: I gladly pay tribute to all those most excellent teachers who regard their first duty as the education of their pupils. Parents throughout the country are very grateful to those teachers. The new pay arrangements are designed to give those teachers greater promotion and greater incomes than others.

Mr. Ron Lewis: Will the Prime Minister tell us whether she read an article which appeared in her favourite newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, a few weeks ago under the heading, "Who takes the prize for champion liar . . .?" Since that publication, it would appear that President Reagan and his team are well ahead in the race. When the Prime Minister goes on television——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is a well-known rule that we do not make accusations by attribution. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not trying to do that.

Mr. Lewis: I have made no accusation, I am quoting from the newspaper.

Mr. Speaker: But that is accusations by attribution.

Mr. Lewis: I do not intend to make any accusations against anyone. When the Prime Minister goes on television during the election, will she confirm to the British public that never at any time in the past seven years has she ever told a single lie?

The Prime Minister: I hope that the hon. Gentleman has looked at the replies that I have given from the Dispatch Box and found them accurate to the very level best of my ability.

Mr. Speaker (Members' Farewells)

Mr. Speaker: I have a brief statement to make. In view of what was said on Tuesday about hon. Members desiring to have an opportunity to bid me farewell, which I much appreciated, I wish to inform the House that I will be in the Chair at the close of business tomorrow to shake the hands of hon. Members, especially those who are not standing for re-election.

I shall be at home in Speaker's House on Monday next between 12 noon and 1 pm. I would welcome the opportunity, on that occasion, to offer refreshment and good wishes for the future to hon. Members who are retiring, and I say to the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) that no one will be turned away.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take it after the statement.

Mr. Faulds *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will take points of order in their usual place. Nothing arises on my statement.

Later——

Mr. Faulds: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is more in the nature of an RSVP than a point of order, and I am sure that you will allow me to make it. It was extraordinarily kind of you to issue such a privileged invitation to me for these small drinks—*[Interruption.]* — perhaps large drinks — on Monday. I shall be responding to you privately about that, with great gratitude for your extraordinary and unique invitation.

However, on the question of the cancellation of the prorogation, do you not agree, as I am sure my colleagues on both sides of the House would agree, that it would be more fitting if in future the wishes of this House and its Speaker were considered rather than the lazy inclinations of the other place and its chairman?

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): I should be careful about giving my hon. Friend open invitations to your place, Mr. Speaker. You never know, he might just sus it out for the future.

On the question of the prorogation——

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Dissolution.

Mr. Skinner: Yes, dissolution. May we have it stated openly, before anyone else puts his foot in it, that the ceremony was stopped in 1979? It did not happen in 1983, and the lack of it is not something new for 1987.

Mr. Speaker: It is not for me to express an opinion. Indeed, the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) once wisely advised me not to do so. However, such ceremonies have good historical reasons and act as a reminder of many of the past struggles of those who have been before us in this place. It would be a matter of regret if we were to let them go.

Airbus A330/A340 Projects

3.33 pm

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Paul Channon): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a statement about the Government's policy on the question of launch aid for British Aerospace's participation in the airbus A330/A340 projects.

After discussion with British Aerospace, I am glad to tell the House that agreement has been reached that up to £450 million in launch aid will be provided to enable the company to participate in the airbus A330 and A340 projects. This launch aid will be fully repayable on terms designed to yield an acceptable return in real terms on the Government's investment. At this stage our support is conditional upon our partner Governments also making the arrangements that are necessary to enable their manufacturers to participate in the projects.

At a time when the competitive pressures in the world aerospace industry are as strong as ever, I would like to praise the determination of Airbus Industrie and its partners to extend their family of large airliners.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): Will the Secretary of State take it from me that the Labour party is wholeheartedly in support of British Aerospace and the airbus programme and that our attitude towards his statement is that it is better late than never? Will he confirm that, whereas the package amounts to £450 million, British Aerospace told the Government that it needed £750 million. and therefore it follows that the Government are helping British Aerospace to the extent of less than two thirds of what it needs?

Will the Secretary of State also confirm that the French and German Governments are to provide more than two thirds of the development costs incurred by their aerospace industries in connection with the airbus programme? Will he admit that, when the money runs out, it will be almost inevitable that thousands of men and women who work for British Aerospace will follow their Westland colleagues into unemployment?

Mr. Channon: I am extremely surprised at the hon. Gentleman's grudging support for the announcement. He said that it is better late than never. I do not know how he can describe it as late. We are the first Government to announce a desire to give launch aid for participation in the project. Frankly, the idea that it is late is ridiculous.

The French and Germans have not offered any money so far, so it would be most unwise of me to speculate about how much they will offer for the costs of the project. I am sure that the project will be a great success. British Aerospace and the Government have been holding constructive talks for some time. Both the company and the Government are satisfied that what I announced today will enable their essential objectives to be achieved. My announcement will help to create and maintain about 10,000 jobs. I should have thought that the House would have welcomed it.

Mr. Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden): My right hon. Friend's statement will be widely welcomed in British civil aviation. It is an extremely important boost to British Aerospace in general, which has been making an ever-greater contribution to Britain's trade balance. Will he confirm that the Government are committed to the group of aircraft that are proving to be world beaters?

Mr. Channon: I agree with what my hon. Friend said about the group of aircraft and also the achievements of British Aerospace and the aerospace industry in general. After all, last year, aerospace industry exports reached nearly £5 billion, which was 12 per cent. up on the figure for 1985. There were orders of some £8 billion, 60 per cent. of which were from overseas. The industry is one of Britain's greatest national assets, and the Government are determined to support it.

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): I congratulate the Government on the announcement. It is welcome on the Opposition Benches, even if it took the imminence of a general election to bring it forward, with perhaps rather more money than was previously forecast. May I take it that the money is adequate for British Aerospace to participate fully in its 20 per cent. stake in the airbus project?

Mr. Channon: It is a little unfair of the hon. Gentleman to say that the imminence of the general election brought about the announcement. We had to make the announcement by 11 June because of the Paris air show, which begins on that date. *[Interruption.]* I expect that other announcements may be made. British Aerospace is convinced that it will be able to participate fully. I am certain that it would not have agreed to participate in such a way if it had not been so convinced.

Sir Anthony Kershaw (Stroud): Is my right hon. Friend aware that many of my constituents, trade union officials and others in the Stroud area will be gratified by the news? I also speak on behalf of the constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Northavon (Mr. Cope) who, because of his position, cannot easily speak about those who work at Filton.

Mr. Channon: It is good news for Filton and all those who work there, and it is also good news for British Aerospace in general.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): Will the Secretary of State say whether there is any provision in the agreement that he reached with British Aerospace for the use of the Rolls-Royce V2500 Superfan as and when that engine becomes available for the A340?

Mr. Channon: We will have to await Rolls-Royce proceeding with that and putting forward proposals for this engine to go into that programme. It would be premature to give the right hon. Gentleman an answer at present.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): My right hon. Friend's announcement is welcome. Does he agree that, far from foot-dragging, our Government are proving to be a catalyst to more effective European aerospace collaboration in securing a whole family of European airbuses that can compete fairly and squarely with Boeing and McDonnell Douglas in the world market? Is not the investment cost-effective, particularly when one considers the repayment terms which will be required from Her Majesty's Treasury?

Mr. Channon: Yes; it is a good investment. I think it is cost-effective and is a very good example of European collaboration. It will be good for the industry, for British Aerospace, and for the taxpayer.

Mr. George Park (Coventry, North-East): Will the Secretary of State accept that his announcement, although welcome, may have the effect of creating difficulties for other projects which British Aerospace is funding without aid?

Mr. Channon: I do not see why that should be so. If British Aerospace had not wanted to participate in this project, it would not have agreed with the Government on this announcement. The Government and British Aerospace are in full agreement on the announcement. Therefore, I cannot agree with the hon. Gentleman. If he has in mind a special point, perhaps he will get in touch with me.

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): I welcome my right hon. Friend's announcement. Can he please tell the House what obligation he has put on British Aerospace to support the rest of the British aerospace industry in the orders and sub-contracts which it will place? In particular, why is there no support for the British equipment industry in this project?

Mr. Channon: I know that my hon. Friend takes a deep interest in the whole industry and in the equipment suppliers. Of course, they are eligible to apply under various schemes and we will consider all cases on their merits. Obviously we have not had any applications yet. On the A320, the British equipment suppliers got a good share of the business. I hope that that will be the case in this project also.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): May I also welcome the announcement by the Secretary of State on behalf of hundreds of constituents and thousands of members of the trade union which sponsors me in Parliament who were fearful of joining their colleagues on the dole queue if the announcement had not been made?

Can the Secretary of State confirm that this is a loan which will have to be repaid because the project is likely to make a great deal of money? Also, in restricting the amount that he is prepared to give to £450 million, does not he agree that other projects being considered by British Aerospace must be in jeopardy because, despite the fact that it has accepted the proposal made by the Minister, it will have to go to the market to find the remaining £300 million?

Mr. Channon: Launch aid is repayable. It is not a grant; it is not a subsidy. The intention is that the principal sum advanced should be repaid in full, together with an adequate return during the life of the programme.

I cannot agree with the hon. Gentleman on the other part of his question. The Government and British Aerospace are satisfied that the launch aid that I have announced today will enable the central objectives of the company to be achieved. It is clearly necessary to safeguard the interests of taxpayers, and British Aerospace properly wishes to safeguard the interests of its shareholders. Both sides are satisfied. I see no reason to complain about the proposal.

Sir Patrick Wall (Beverley): I congratulate my right hon. Friend whose announcement will have a good effect in my constituency. Is it not £100 million more than was in question when the original negotiations took place? Can my right hon. Friend confirm that it is wholly for the airbus project and not for any other project such as HOTOL?

Mr. Channon: This is launch aid entirely for the A330 and A340 projects. I do not want to go into all the details of the negotiations with British Aerospace, but I think that it is well known that there have been talks on different sums at different times. Both sides are satisfied with this announcement. I am glad that my hon. Friend has spoken about this because I know of the great concern in his constituency which I was happy to visit a little while ago when I had discussions about this very matter.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): Since many of us, on behalf of constituents working in British Aerospace factories, including those at Salmesbury, Preston and Wharton in Lancashire, have been in correspondence seeking pledges from the Government over many months for launch aid, is it not the case that both the amount of the aid and the timing of the announcement have been dictated by the anxieties of Conservatives in marginal seats? The Minister says that this money is to be repaid with a rate of return. Is it not a sad reflection on the City that British Aerospace is unable to obtain long-term investment funds for this project save from the British Government?

Mr. Channon: I do not think that that is true at all. Very large sums in funding have been committed to the project by British Aerospace itself. The characteristics of civil aircraft programmes are long development and payback periods, and the level of risk exposure means that the close involvement of Governments is a factor in many countries. It is appropriate for an element of Government support to be given. This is in no way to suggest that the City's support should be criticised. The amount is agreed with British Aerospace, so I cannot understand why any hon. Member should wish to disagree on that point.

I have made an early announcement because I thought that that was in the interests of the company and those who work in it and also because I expect that a firm decision will have to be taken by other Governments during the course of the next few weeks; and, frankly, I thought that the House of Commons had a right to be informed.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): On the matter of competition, will my right hon. Friend confirm that as long as the French and the German Governments make contributions in line with the contribution of the British Government and he can give an assurance that there should be major success with these two aircraft this should be published not only to the House of Commons but also to those companies that originally placed provisional orders for these aircraft in order that the necessary assurance can be given to them to overcome the approaches of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, which obviously would like to see the provisional orders removed from these aircraft going to the American companies? It is most important that something should be done on these lines.

Mr. Channon: I agree with my hon. Friend. I am very hopeful that our partners in France, Germany and Spain will also wish to participate in this programme. Indeed, I

[Mr. Channon]

am certain that they will. I believe that substantial sales can be achieved. It is extremely significant and encouraging that there are commitments from nine airlines for the A330 and the A340 totalling 128 aircraft and that these have been obtained in advance of a formal commitment to launch the programme. The House will also be aware that there are orders and options for the A320 numbering 442 with almost a year to go before that aircraft enters commercial service.

Mr. David Young (Bolton, South-East): Will the Minister please assure the House that he will keep under review financial support for British firms in the civil aviation industry so that in all ways, commercially and industrially, we back these firms and enable them to maintain the leadership which they have now established in the industry?

Mr. Channon: I think that our actions speak louder than words. We have indeed supported this industry. I agree with the hon. Member about its great importance; the British aerospace industry is now the second largest in the world. It is one of our most flourishing industries and I am looking forward to supporting it still more in the next Parliament.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement, which seems to me to underline our commitment to the concept of a European civil aircraft industry and therefore is keeping faith with our European partners. Can he give any estimate of the additional work which may be generated for British industry from these two projects?

Mr. Channon: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I agree with him about the signal that this will give to the European civil aviation industry in general.

I think that this will maintain or create some 10,000 jobs in the aerospace industry in this country. It will provide very substantial job opportunities and a very substantial amount of work. I hope that it will provide a substantial amount of work for equipment suppliers and, indeed, for many other suppliers further down the line who will have the spin-off from that. It is a very big project and will provide a great deal of work.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on making this announcement. Will he confirm that this will keep the British aerospace industry at the leading edge of technology and therefore lead to further orders outside this narrow, although very large, order in relation to Airbus Industrie? Will he point out to the House and Britain as a whole that this demonstrates the Government's continuing support for manufacturing industry in this county and gives the lie to the Opposition statements that we are constantly running down manufacturing industry?

Mr. Channon: I agree with my hon. Friend's last point. The view that he describes is sheer nonsense. As the whole House knows, it is very encouraging to see that the growth in productivity in our manufacturing industry is now outstripping that in the rest of the world. It is also encouraging to see how well British Aerospace has done since it was privatised. Its profit figures and its record of orders from abroad are excellent. The House should be proud of that, and all hon. Members on both sides of the House who have worked closely with British Aerospace know of the great success of that firm. It is winning many other orders overseas, and will take part in many other projects apart from the A330 and A340 projects.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Whatever happened to monetarism? For the past three and a half years, just as in the previous general election campaign, the Government have been telling us that throwing money at companies in both the private and the public sectors will not create jobs. Yet for the past six months leading up to the announcement of the election Ministers have been scrambling to get to the Dispatch Box to tell us about the grants, loans, subsidies and so forth that have been allocated to provide jobs. If they can provide jobs during the six months before an election, why cannot the Government be honest enough to tell us that they will do it throughout? Is it true that they are going to call this Airbus Election '87?

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman does not really want a lecture on monetarism from me, and the House would be pretty bored if I attempted to give one. I believe that there is a general desire in all quarters of the House — and that includes the hon. Gentleman — that we should support this imaginative scheme. It will be very good for British aviation, and for Britain in general.

We have taken an extremely short time to make up our minds. We have done it more quickly than any of the other partner Governments, whom, in the words of the Leader of the Opposition, he no doubt considers slothful. We are determined to take part in the scheme, and the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) cannot say that we are throwing away money as the taxpayer will receive an acceptable rate of return in real terms.

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): Will my right hon. Friend accept the thanks of the many people who work for British Aerospace at Filton, in my constituency, for today's announcement? Does he agree that in building on the success of the A320, as he has done this afternoon, he is showing that we as a Government support success rather than wishing, as the Opposition spokesman, the hon. Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis), appears to have done this afternoon, that he had come to the Dispatch Box and announced failure?

Mr. Channon: I agree entirely. We believe in backing success. This company has been very successful, and we are pleased to be able, after careful evaluation, to offer launch aid for the programme. It is extremely good news for Filton. I am sure that I am not alone in paying tribute to the excellent work done there, and I hope that there is a good future for that base of British Aerospace.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): On behalf of hundreds of my constituents who work for British Aerospace at Woodford, I thank my right hon. Friend and the Government for the statement. As he has said, British Aerospace has been outstandingly successful since its privatisation, not only in guaranteeing secure jobs but in its return on capital invested. Will he emphasise that, if we are to continue to play a meaningful part in providing civil aviation aircraft, it is vital that British Aerospace should be part of any wide-bodied project so that it can compete with McDonnell Douglas and Boeing?

Will my right hon. Friend also give an assurance that if, in the light of subsequent events, the French and the

Germans are seen to be giving additional launch aid, he will be prepared to consider a further approach from the management of British Aerospace for further aid? As my right hon. Friend highlighted in his statement, such aid will be repaid in accordance with the production of the A330 and the A340 as and when they are produced and sold.

Mr. Channon: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for his support. I know of the work that is done at Woodford and of the great importance of that work to British Aerospace.

I agree about the importance of the civil aviation industry in this country and in Europe. This afternoon's announcement will enable British Aerospace to join the Germans, the French and the Spanish in European collaboration to provide these aeroplanes. It will lead to a very exciting future for European civil aviation, going wider than United Kingdom civil aviation alone, although that must be our particular concern.

As for French and German launch aid, I do not think that I should anticipate what the German and French Governments may announce, because I have no idea what that announcement may be. Therefore, I had better stick to what I have already said—that this is good news.

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): Is my right hon. Friend aware that this decision will be widely welcomed not only in constituencies such as that of my hon. but silent Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward), which has a British Aerospace manufacturing facility, but also in Cannock and Burntwood, where we take an objective view of these matters? Does my right hon. Friend agree that this historic decision represents a decisive strike at Boeing's long-held monopoly in the long-haul market?

Mr. Channon: I am very grateful to my hon. Friend. I assure him that the silence of our hon. Friend does not mean that he has not been an active pursuer of this decision. I pay tribute to many of my hon. Friends, who have been very persuasive and who have explained to me very clearly and coherently why this is such an important project. I am also very glad to have the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) for this very exciting project, which will be very good for the future of the aviation industry.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): I thank my right hon. Friend for the statement, which will be widely welcomed by those who work at British Aerospace, Broughton, where the wings for the A330 and A340 will be built, but is he able to provide more details about launch aid? Is he able to give the time span over which the money will be made available? Will it be front-end loaded? Does he agree that these two planes can be at least as commercially viable as the A320, which had more firm advance orders than any other civil aircraft in the history of mankind?

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend recently came with a deputation to see me about the matter, and I pay tribute to him for his continuing interest in the project. There is every prospect of these aircraft being commercially viable. If I did not believe that, the Government would not have offered launch aid. I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive me if I do not go into the details of the launch aid, which must remain commercially confidential. However, it would not be going too far to say that there is a considerable element of front-end loading that will be helpful to British Aerospace.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Geoffrey Dickens.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): They also serve, Mr. Speaker, who stand and wait.

General elections always bring out the worst in everybody. Despite some of the remarks that have been made about this statement, on behalf of the thousands of people who work for British Aerospace, whether on the shop floor or in the board room and of whatever political party, may I thank my right hon. Friend most sincerely for this vote of confidence and support in them, including hundreds of my constituents in Littleborough and Saddleworth? I hope that it will be duly recorded that it was due to my representations that they got the money.

Mr. Channon: I am very grateful to my hon. Friend. During the lifetime of this Parliament I have made it an absolute rule to do everything that my hon. Friend asks me to do.

Mr. Speaker: May I say to the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) that very frequently those who stand have to wait!

Appellate Committee (Proceedings)

Mr. Speaker: I undertook to reply today to the point of order raised yesterday by the hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) about the making available to hon. Members of this House and to the public of the proceedings of the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords. In the time available, I have been able to make only a preliminary appreciation of the problems involved, but I have already concluded that the matter raised by the hon. Gentleman touches upon the rights of the House of Lords to determine which parts of its proceedings to print or publish. I undertake to draw the attention of the authorities of the House of Lords to the hon. Gentleman's point and to supply them with a copy of the arguments that he advanced in its support.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for your response. However, with the delicacy and tact perennially at your command in these matters, might you not also draw to the attention of the authorities in another place the fact that their expenses are met from the Consolidated Fund by a Vote of this House and that their Members subsist thanks to that Vote? Therefore, if they wish to stand on the fine point of expenditure, that may call into question an examination of their whole expenditure before this House votes it—perhaps something that neither they nor some of us would wish to bring about.

BILL PRESENTED

VEHICLE NUMBER PLATES

Mr. Fallon presented a Bill to regulate the manufacture and supply of vehicle number plates; and for connected purposes; And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 163.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, in respect of the Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Bill *[Lords]*, if the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House, further proceedings on the Bill shall stand postponed and that as soon as the proceedings on any Ways and Means Resolution come to by the House in relation to the Bill have been concluded, this House will immediately resolve itself into a Committee on the Bill.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Resolved,

That this House shall not adjourn to-morrow until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses. — *[Mr. Durant.]*

Orders of the Day

Criminal Justice Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Clause 1

THE SERIOUS FRAUD OFFICE

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 2, line 15, after "him" insert "on reasonable grounds"

4.2 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 4 and 172.

Mr. Mellor: The Bill comes back to us in a somewhat different form from that in which it left us, as I am sure that those of us who sat through 36 sittings of the Committee will ruefully have to concede. I am glad that the other place was prepared to consider, in the time available, the very important provisions of part I, dealing with serious fraud, which have always commanded the support of all parties in the House. We properly had lively debates in both Chambers and in Committee about the precise nature of, and the demarcation lines appropriate to, the powers, duties and responsibilities of the Serious Fraud Office.

Clearly, a number of significant provisions in the Bill will not now become law during the lifetime of this Parliament; for example, the important changes to the laws of extradition and the arrangements for child witnesses to give evidence by video link as well as other significant changes to the laws of evidence, changes in penalties and important improvements in the law on confiscation. I hope and expect that those provisions will come back at an early stage of the new Parliament. I trust that they will then be considered with the seriousness of purpose and in the spirit of co-operation that characterised our debates in Committee.

The amendments mainly serve to make explicit assumptions that we believe to be implicit. Amendment No. 1 makes it clear, for example, that the director of the Serious Fraud Office may involve himself in a case only on reasonable grounds. Under amendments Nos. 2 and 3 the admissibility of prior inconsistent statements in the court when the defendant chooses to give evidence is placed beyond doubt. In the other place Lord Roskill called forcefully for the deletion of clause 2(8) on the ground that the financial and companies legislation on which the Serious Fraud Office powers are modelled expressly allow evidence obtained by the investigative powers to be adduced in court against those who provided the information.

We undertook to reflect further on that matter, and naturally gave great weight to the fact that the point was made to us by Lord Roskill, who, with others, had been charged with the duty of considering the matter and bringing forward the report upon which the present changes are based. Nevertheless, we concluded that the traditional safeguards in criminal proceedings should remain. Those who served on the Committee will remember that I relied heavily on those safeguards when defending the extension into the criminal field from the more limited field of the regulation of companies the power to require compulsory answer.

Under the rule about previous inconsistent statements, it is generally understood that if the defendant chooses to give evidence in court and his statement is inconsistent with a statement made on a previous occasion he can be cross-examined on the inconsistency, because it is part of the prosecution's duty to test the credibility of the witness. Amendments Nos. 2 and 3 put it beyond doubt that that rule will apply to statements made to the Serious Fraud Office, but do not otherwise touch on the points that were exhaustively considered in Committee.

This very important matter concerns the safeguard of the normal rules of criminal procedure, and balances it against the requirement, which most of us believe to be necessary, to allow investigators, using powers that have been used for many years in another context, to require answers when they are essential to the proper pursuit of investigation through a maze of interlinked companies or of financial transactions involving several accounts and perhaps around several countries.

I am sorry to have taken up a little of the House's time on this matter, but we think that the Bill is improved by the clarification that resulted from cross-party consideration in another place.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): The Minister referred to the 36 sittings of the Standing Committee. Opposition Members believe that the Bill has emerged from the other place in much better shape than it was in when it left this place. We are especially pleased that the clause that would have removed the defence's right to peremptory challenge has disappeared. There are, of course, items which, I suspect, will shortly be deleted, and which we shall be sad to lose. Examples include the ability to ensure that children can give evidence by video link rather than directly in awesome and sometimes frightening circumstances before a court, especially in cases involving violence or sexual abuse.

A further part which we support and would certainly wish to see enshrined in legislation under the Labour Government who will take office on 12 June is the increase in compensation for victims of crime and the establishment for the first time of a statutory body to ensure that they can receive compensation. We were disappointed at the Government's lack of generosity in excluding about 28 per cent. of potential victims from the provisions of their Bill and that is something that we shall put right in a new Bill under the Labour Government.

There is much that we are happy to see going down the drain and it would be foolish to pretend otherwise. The provision on peremptory challenge is one, and is the most important of the provisions that we are happy to see disappear.

We are glad that the provision to establish the Serious Fraud Office, to which the Lords amendments refer, will remain, as we have consistently supported it. We had detailed arguments in Committee about the precise mechanisms under which the Serious Fraud Office should work, and we still have some reservations about the Government's intentions in relation to its funding. We wish to ensure that it is properly funded, especially in the light of the establishment of the Crown Prosecution Service, which hitherto has been inadequately funded.

We support the establishment of the Serious Fraud Office and we are particularly pleased that Lords amendment No. 1 inserts a test of reasonability on the director of the Serious Fraud Office in deciding what to investigate. It seems sensible that that provision should be included and we support the amendment. We have no major differences with the Government over the other amendments and we are happy to agree that they should be included in the Bill.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): I am pleased that the Serious Fraud Office has been saved, and I entirely endorse much of what my hon Friend the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) said. Some parts of the Bill, such as those dealing with extradition laws and certain matters of sentencing, have much merit in them and I am sure that my hon. Friend and his colleagues will bring them before the House after 12 June. If the worst comes to the worst and we must again face the Minister, they will also no doubt come back.

In the intervening period perhaps the Government and my hon. Friends will consider the views expressed by professional and other bodies on other parts of the Bill. The debate goes on, and perhaps we can use the time well by learning from those views. In the light of recent events, the extradition laws, for example, should be considered even more carefully so that we get them absolutely right.

In general there is cross-party agreement because all of us wish to see the criminal law work effectively and the time of the courts saved by law becoming definitive and clear. I ask the Minister for an undertaking in respect of the Serious Fraud Office in the unfortunate event of his party being the Government after 12 June. I have already secured an undertaking on funding from my hon Friend and I declare a public interest as a practising barrister.

I am appalled at the way in which the Crown Prosecution Service has been starved of funds, facilities and support. Experienced lawyers of many years standing have become fed up with the bureaucratic nightmare of the Crown Prosecution Service and have left. Lawyers from the old county prosecuting solicitors' department who were transferred and promoted suddenly find within 12 months that people who were transferred as their deputies are promoted to the same level. No one objects to their having the same standing, but those who were promoted subsequently are often £2,000 or £3,000 a year better off than those who were transferred and promoted at the same time. Senior Crown prosecutors are leaving the service in droves and we cannot afford to lose them. I make no secret of the fact that a member of my family is employed in that service.

4.15 pm

That concept, which both the Minister and I were in favour of, is being ruined by the short-sightedness of the mandarins at the Treasury. That is why I secured an undertaking from our Front Bench team that in the event of their forming the next Government they would ensure that the Serious Fraud Office was properly manned. Unless it is staffed with people of the highest calibre, we shall never successfully get at the rats and destroyers in the City who have creamed millions, if not billions, off the wealth of the nation through swindles at Lloyd's, share-dealing swindles in the City and a multitude of other

[Mr. Gerald Bermingham]

swindles from long-term fraud to bogus supplying. A bogus supplier begins by supplying vast quantities of products but fails to pay those supplying him. They are complex, difficult matters which require the employment of accountants and people with great knowledge of the financial world. We cannot buy those people cheaply; we must pay them salaries commensurate with what they can earn in private practice or in the City. If we want the best, we must pay for the best. If we want the best investigative service, we must provide support staff and the most experienced lawyers. In other words, we must invest.

By investing in the service and making it work properly we shall in the long run save the nation vast sums. If we can catch fraud early and prosecute fraudsters successfully, others will be deterred. But it takes willpower and effort, experience and expertise to prosecute them successfully. These fraudsters are no amateurs; they are professionals who set out deliberately to cream millions of pounds from our economy. To catch a villain in a modern, complex society, we must know as much as the villain, and to know as much as the villain we must use experts who understand the subject properly, and that costs money.

Will the Minister undertake to fund the Serious Fraud Office properly? I hope he accepts that I ask for it for the best possible reasons. I do not want to see the sadnesses of the Crown Prosecution Service repeated. They are causing considerable grief to many people who have a great interest in that area and who are greatly supportive of it. It was a brilliant idea and unless the tide can be reversed it risks being destroyed by underfunding. I do not blame the Minister for that, as he well knows; I blame a lack of foresight on the part of those who do not understand the service and how it needs to be funded.

Perhaps in the next four weeks we can send the mandarins at the Treasury on a crash course to learn how prosecution services work. If the mandarins could learn that, they might let loose enough pounds and pennies to enable that service, and the service we are helping to bring into existence today, to be funded so that it can work effectively and to ensure that the guilty are prosecuted to conviction. I wait to hear whether I get the undertaking from the Minister that I have already had from my hon. Friend.

Mr. Mellor: With the leave of the House, I shall respond briefly to the points that have been made.

I am grateful to the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) for accepting the amendments, and I hope that the whole House will share his view. The answer to the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) is that the new office will have all the resources that it needs to do its job. There is no question about that. In defence of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, who led the study within the Government from which the Serious Fraud Office emerged as our response to Lord Roskill's committee, I must say that he, as much as anyone, has a vested interest in the office running successfully and I know that he would fully endorse all that I have said.

I appreciate and have welcomed the interest of the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury in Bills such as this over the lifetime of the Parliament. I acknowledge that no one was keener than he was on the Crown Prosecution Service. However, he has been unfair in his description of its present state. It is not strictly relevant to the Bill, but I shall take just a few sentences to comment on it. My right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General, who has taken charge of the Crown Prosecution Service at ministerial level, has made very clear the commitment of the Government to ensuring that it receives proper resources. There has been a marked increase in the resources made available, which has allowed the service to offer considerably higher salaries than were originally on offer, to the point where organisations such as the Justices Clerks Society—which springs to mind because it made the point at a recent function that I attended—have said that a number of justices clerks are now leaving that service to join the Crown Prosecution Service because of the salaries on offer.

Inevitably, when a major change is made there are bound to be teething troubles and difficulties. I do not think that any of us would have expected otherwise. The fact that we have achieved a nationwide service makes the crucial distinction. The Royal Commission established by the last Government, the views of which in other respects were carried into force by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, asserted that it was absolutely necessary to separate the processes of investigation from the processes of prosecution.

I have little doubt that in the fullness of time the idea will not only be proved to be a good one, but in practice will succeed in effecting improvements in our system, particularly if it can address what I believe is the real difficulty—the amount of expense and time taken, and the unnecessary trouble and fuss caused, when prosecutions that do not stand a great chance of success nevertheless limp through the court system and are terminated at a far later stage than need be the case if they had been scrutinised earlier.

I am grateful for the welcome the House has given to the amendments, and I further commend them to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 4

NOTICES OF TRANSFER—PROCEDURE

Lords amendment: No. 5, in page 8, line 18, leave out "(4)" and insert "(3) and (7A)".

Mr. Mellor: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 6 and 7.

Mr. Mellor: I think that we can take the amendments shortly. *[Interruption.]* I do not know why the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) is interrupting, because this is not Scottish business. I am not sure how advantageous to the general understanding of these complicated matters his interruptions are. The first two amendments allow magistrates to order witnesses to attend the Crown court trial where cases are transferred by the new procedure in the same way as they would if the case were committed. The third amendment ensures that the judge takes into account any oral submissions that may be made in an application for discharge in determining whether there is a case to answer. They are technical amendments that improve the comprehensibility of the Bill.

Mr. Chris Smith: We have no great quarrel with the Government on the three amendments. Amendment No. 6 states in subsection *(b)*:

"a person whose written statement is tendered in evidence for the purpose of the notice of transfer shall be treated as a person who has been examined by the court."

At first sight that might appear to enshrine the dangerous principle that evidence can be taken as having been examined, even though it is simply tendered in writing. Because we are talking here about an early stage in the criminal proceedings that follow the investigation by the Serious Fraud Office, although we have some qualms that ought to be put on the record about the principle that appears to be enshrined here, we are happy that the amendments should be accepted.

Amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 6 and 7 agreed to.

Clause 7

POWER TO ORDER PREPARATORY HEARING

Lords amendment: No. 8, in page 10, line 33, leave out from beginning to "it" in line 34.

Mr. Mellor: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 9 to 35.

Mr. Mellor: All the amendments relate to the preparatory hearing procedures. The bulk of them make the distinction called for by the Criminal Bar Association between a defendant and his lawyer for the purpose of the preparatory hearing. On that basis, I hope that the amendments will be welcomed by the House.

Amendment No. 20 responds to the concern expressed by the Opposition in another place and makes the obligations upon the defence at the preparatory hearing a little less specific than they were. I accept that the wording that has been substituted follows the relevant part of the Roskill report — paragraph 6.82. In no sense do we resent the change, because it seems eminently proper. It is faithful both to the Committee's views and to our central aim of allowing the preparatory hearing to be an effective procedure for defining the issues to be put to the jury.

Amendment No. 31 also responds to a point made by the Opposition in another place. It is taken from a useful precedent in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which allows a jury to draw such inferences as appear proper from a refusal to provide an intimate sample in a police investigation. The parallel seems to us to be apt. When one is suggesting that inferences of that kind be drawn, there is some advantage in statutes, particularly those that follow closely upon each other in time, setting the parameters and using the same phraseology. The amendment achieves that. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr. Chris Smith: We give a warm welcome to the amendments, especially those that have been persuaded upon the Government by the Criminal Bar Association and those that were moved by the Opposition in the other place. We give a special welcome to amendment No. 20, because it gives a much more general interpretation of the terms that must be set out by the defence at the preparatory hearing. It follows Roskill and is something that we pressed upon the Government in Committee. Therefore, I am pleased that, with the assistance of the other place, it is to be included in the Bill.

There is one question that I wish to ask of the Minister, the answer to which I suspect is probably easy and technical. In respect of amendment No. 35, the principal change that seems to be made, especially by subparagraph (b), is that material may not be disclosed

"without the consent of the person who supplied or gave it."

In the original form of the Bill it was without the consent of the defence. I suspect that in some circumstances, only a limited number, they may be different people. I should be grateful for an indication from the Minister of the Government's thinking on that. I suspect that we have no quarrel on the matter, but it would be useful to have a small amount of clarification. With that sole and small question, I should like on behalf of the Opposition to give a warm welcome to the amendments.

4.30 pm

Mr. Bermingham: My hon. Friend the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) is too modest. The House may remember that amendment No. 20 follows concerns expressed in Committee during the passage of the Bill. The original draft of the Bill required the setting out in some detail of exactly the nature of the defence that was to be advanced. That was a breach of the long-standing practice by which people were under no duty to reveal their defence. The Bill in its present form merely asks the defence to state the issues upon which it will seek to challenge the prosecution case.

A considerable number of cases set out along one track and people think that the defence will do one thing rather than another. However, because of issues brought to light by way of cross-examination or otherwise, the whole nature of the defence can change as the case progresses. Under the provisions of amendment No. 20, that will remain so and people will not feel restrained or restricted as would be the case if the defence had to be advanced along the lines disclosed in the preparatory stages.

This is a sensible amendment which all practising criminal lawyers will welcome.

Mr. Mellor: Again with the leave of the House, I am glad to say that I welcome the reception for these amendments. I hope that the whole manner in which the Government have dealt with this Bill is characterised by the fact that we accept good advice when we receive it. I accepted many amendments in Standing Committee, some of which were significant. My noble Friend the Minister of State, Home Office did the same in the other place. Far from that being a sign of weakness, it is a sign of strength when we can gather together and draw on experience throughout the Chamber on technical matters that generate no partisan differences. On the whole, these matters did not generate such differences.

The hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) asked about amendment No. 35. This amendment follows directly from the invitation to us by the Criminal Bar Association to distinguish between the accused and his lawyer. All references to the defence have been altered in order to be more specific. If there is any additional significance to that change, I shall be happy to drop the hon. Gentleman a note. These are technical

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drafting amendments and I am assured that they have the effect only of meeting the point that I think we all agree ought to be met. There is no additional significance to them.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 9 to 35 agreed to.

Clause 12

CHARGES OF AND PENALTY FOR CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD

Lords amendment: No. 36, in page 15, line 43, at end insert—

"(1A) In section 5(2) of the Criminal Law Act 1977, the words from 'and' to the end are hereby repealed."

Mr. Mellor: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords' amendments Nos. 37 to 198.

Mr. Mellor: These are technical amendments, the combined result of which is to reduce the Bill to only those provisions associated with the operation of clauses 1 to 12. The final amendment, which reduces the long title of the Bill, is perhaps the neatest illustration of the radical but precise surgery performed by these amendments.

Mr. Chris Smith: The Minister is kidding us when he says that these are technical amendments. They are drastically radical amendments because, of course, they excise from the Bill everything that does not relate to the establishment of the Serious Fraud Office. We welcome the departure of much that these amendments excise, and we attach great importance to the disappearance of the removal of the right of peremptory challenge.

It may be helpful to the House if I give a strong commitment that the Labour Government who come into office in four weeks' time will seek to legislate to ensure that a proper statutory scheme of compensation for the victims of crime is established on more generous terms than those proposed in the original Criminal Justice Bill. Our legislation will include the provision that the Government gracefully accepted in Committee for the compensation of train drivers who suffer shock after an accident involving a person. We shall also seek to legislate to ensure that children can give evidence by means of a video link rather than having to give evidence in court.

We attach great importance to those matters and we hope that we can build on the constructive work that we carried out in Committee on those two specific areas by bringing forward further measures. We shall do that when we form the new Government in four weeks' time.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): I have no doubt that the electors of Putney will recognise the superb service that they have had from their Member of Parliament in the last four years, and that in shortly over a month's time my hon. and learned Friend the Minister will return to the high office that he now holds. At that time he will be in a position to reintroduce these clauses. I have personal experience of my hon. and learned Friend's tremendous understanding and the courtesy that he showed during the passage of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Bill, and I know that on occasions he is willing to review situations.

When my hon. and learned Friend returns to this matter, will he consider again clause 29, which deals with the prosecution appeal against sentence? Will he reconsider the point made by many hon. Members in Committee, on the Floor of the House and in another place that if the prosecution is to have a right of appeal against sentence — and we believe that it should — it should also have the right, if necessary, to seek to have the sentence increased?

Hon. Members have already spoken about clause 89. It deals with the abolition of the right to peremptory challenge. In Committee and in the House we face assaults on this clause. The alliance spokesman, who, sadly, is not in the House, attacked this clause. In spite of their new-found allegiance to the cause of law and order which we believe was heavily leaked from the alliance parties' manifesto, I hope that my hon. and learned Friend will give no ground whatever. I hope that when the Bill comes back to the House—once more under his pilotage—we shall have the proposal to abolish the right to peremptory challenge back in the Bill where it belongs.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): I wish to express my opposition to amendments Nos. 120 to 137 and amendment No. 180 which have the effect of deleting clauses 96 to 133 and schedule 9. I oppose the amendments because the clauses and the schedule cover amendments to the law of extradition that the Government were wise enough to propose in the original Bill. That was almost an heroic proposal on their part, because the extradition law in this country in the form in which we are debating it today derives from an 1870 Act. Therefore, it has taken a long time to bring forward amendments to bring the law up to date. Over the past 10 years Governments have promised reforms, but have never gone about it until, happily, this Government did. It is a great shame that the proposal before us is that we should abandon again this attempt at reforming the law of extradition to bring it up to date.

Broadly speaking, there are three sets of beneficial proposals in the clauses. There is a proposal for summary procedure in our extradition law, and that would have been very useful in cases where there was little opposition. There would have been conditions with regard to restrictions of extradition to Commonwealth states, which apply in the updated law — that is, the Fugitive Offenders Act 1967. The relevant clauses would have applied to the Extradition Act 1870, or the new extradition law proposed by the Bill. It is important to bring such matters up to date.

There would have been simplified rules of evidence. We all know how much difficulty the courts have run into because of the tortuous rules of evidence which apply to the original extradition law. Those clauses represent a very useful reform. In Committee, there was scarcely any opposition to them, so I am somewhat puzzled as to why the Government have chosen to agree with the Lords proposal that we should drop them. The matters were debated and I cannot recall any outright opposition or a single Division being called on any of part IX of the Bill.

I ask my hon. and learned Friend—I am glad that he is now officially a learned Friend — whether it was necessary, after all these years when we tried to bring extradition law up to date, to abandon the reforms attempted by the Government.

Mr. Mark Carlisle (Warrington, South): Having once had the honour to hold the office which my hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State now holds, and having in that capacity taken a major Criminal Justice Bill through the House, in 1971, it is perhaps appropriate that my final words in the House should be to congratulate my hon. and learned Friend on the way he has carried out his duties in the Home Office and to say that I welcome the decision of the House of Lords to delete clause 29.

The House of Lords has twice removed what I believe to be an ill-thought-out and ill-considered proposal by the Government. My hon. and learned Friend may consider, when he comes back after the election in a Conservative Government with a substantial majority, that, as far as clause 29 is concerned, the best advice the third time may be not to try at all.

Mr. Bermingham: I echo and endorse what the right hon. and learned Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) said in perhaps his last contribution. He will be sadly missed. He brings much wisdom and learning to these debates and we all learn much from listening to him.

I support, as I did in Committee, the view of the hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook). The sooner we bring the extradition laws up to date, the better. We had an opportunity, on a matter which was not disputed in Committee, to rectify a series of glaring omissions from the extradition law. When crime becomes international, as it has, we must make it easier for people to be extradited to the country where the offence took place or to seek and obtain the extradition of people who have committed crimes in this country. The matter is not politically sensitive; it comes in the international context of the pursuit of crime, and our laws must be updated and modernised.

I asked my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) for an undertaking that, in the event of our forming the Government after 12 June, the provisions will be brought back to the House at the earliest opportunity. I received such an assurance. I ask the Minister whether, in the event of his party forming the next Government, the same assurance can be given. It is of international importance that we pursue crime wherever it is committed and that our law should facilitate such pursuit.

4.45 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): I wish to speak briefly on clauses 29, 32 and 125. I am sorry that my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) took the view he did. I am glad that clause 29 will come out, but for a slightly different reason.

The powers in clause 29 are quite inadequate. The ordinary person in the street does not understand why those provisions were so weak. Recently in my constituency a Mrs. Whitehouse, landlady of the Lamb inn in Stafford, was brutally beaten and the person who did it received only a nine months' suspended sentence. If the power had been adequate, the opportunity could have been taken to review the position. I hope that when we return to office shortly a similar but tougher provision will be included in the new Bill.

I am somewhat concerned at the removal of clause 32. I hope that that will come back rapidly because there is no question but that penalties for crimes must be increased.

Clause 125 relates to anonymity in rape cases. That is a matter of considerable controversy. The ordinary man and woman in the street are deeply concerned about this issue and it must be dealt with.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister on the way in which he has conducted himself in his office. Those of us who are observers of these things have noted, both on the "Today" programme and on many other occasions, the way in which he has done a great service to his office.

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): I must tread carefully on this matter, not being an expert in legal matters, but I have checked my facts with the Minister. First, I apologise to him on behalf of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) for his absence. I am attending on his behalf because he has asked me to do so.

I support what the hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) said about extradition. It incenses me and many of my constituents who lost much money in a Lloyd's fraud that a gentleman is sitting in America with vast sums of money and we are unable to bring him back for trial. I have asked questions of the Attorney-General, but so far nothing has happened. Our Belgian friends must also feel pretty sick after the recent Liverpool case.

I support what has been said by all hon. Members and hope that the new Bill will include those clauses and they will go through swiftly.

Mr. Mellor: I am delighted to see my hon. Friend the Member for Scarborough (Sir M. Shaw) here because he chaired the Committee with considerable distinction, just as he chaired the 59 sittings of the Committee on the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. That had got to the Lords amendment stage at the end of the last Parliament, but had to be reintroduced. Any illusion one may have had that the Bill had been well turned over and therefore would go through speedily was set to one side, as there were 59 sittings, which I believe to be a parliamentary record. It has been asserted by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) that it was a parliamentary record and, of course, I believe implicitly every word he says.

When my hon. Friend was chairing the Committee, he told us that he suspected we would not have the last word on this Bill. I congratulate him on the ability of whatever gipsy he consults on Scarborough beach, because the prediction was right. I shall not mind in the least having another go at this measure. I am confident that the Government will reintroduce the Bill at an early stage, because it contains matters which are far too crucial to let drop.

I endorse what my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) said, supported by others, about the significance of the extradition proposals. The extradition arrangements must be modernised. We cannot go on appearing to be an inhospitable place from which other civilised countries try to get their criminals back. That merely invites a similar lack of co-operation towards our own efforts. There is a blot on our procedures because, for example, we have only one tenth of West Germany's extradition traffic, so unappealing are our arrangements for our friends and associates within the European Community and elsewhere.

I cannot criticise the other place for deciding that it could not send these matters back to us without full

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consideration because this was to have been the first substantive change in extradition arrangements for 117 years. We cannot begrudge our revising Chamber the right to examine such matters.

Other parts of the Bill could have been salvaged if other parties had so wished. In particular, I regret that the child video evidence provisions were not saved. I also regret that the increased penalties for insider dealings are not attached to the Bill. This is not a time for partisan points. At least the serious fraud provisions can pass into law. We intend to pursue the other matters at the earliest opportunity.

I am grateful to my hon. Friends the Members for Stafford (Mr. Cash) and for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) and to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle). My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North asked whether we would think again about clause 29. My candid answer is that we will have to think about it again in the light of what has happened. Precisely what form those other thoughts will take is not a matter for the present. I am clear—I say this with some pain because of the respect that I have for my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South — in believing that the option of doing nothing is not open, but we shall think carefully about it.

Our commitment to the abolition of peremptory challenge is as strong as ever. That will unite all my hon. Friends in the Chamber.

I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North for what he said about my personal contribution. He has been with me on a number of committees which have led to significant changes in the law, particularly to changes in the law on animal experimentation which have taken that issue out of its former context.

I am most grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford for what he said.

No one has been more consistently kind and helpful to me than my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South during my eight years in the House. I have great respect for him for what he did in government and for what he has done since for home affairs and as chairman of our Back-Bench home affairs committee. He will be much missed by all his friends here and elsewhere.

The achievement by the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) is formidable. Most of us are elected to the House on the back of a successful ongoing tide. He won his seat in spectacular fashion and held on to it. He has suffered some ill health in recent years, and I regret that that has caused him to announce his retirement. I wish him well. He has many friends in this place.

I regret that this radical surgery on the Bill is necessary. It is unfinished business and we shall not be long delayed in coming back to it.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 37 to 198 agreed to.

Parliamentary and Health Service Commissioners Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Lords amendments Nos. 1 and 2 agreed to.

Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Bill *[Lords]*

Order for Second Reading read.

4.55 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I am grateful to the Opposition for supporting the Bill's passage. It is a worthy measure which will help many ex-service men and their dependants. The trust was established to benefit Irish veterans of the first world war. In view of their declining numbers, it is right that surplus funds should be released to benefit Irish veterans of more recent conflicts. I commend the Bill to the House.

4.56 pm

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): I am sure that widows, widowers and former members of Her Majesty's armed forces and their children who are affected by the Bill will be grateful to hon. Members on all sides of the House for agreeing that the Bill should pass before the election, after which a Labour Government will be returned.

It would help if the Minister could say how much money is involved so that the people concerned know exactly what residual amount will be distributed by the distributory agency when it is appointed by the new Labour Secretary of State.

4.57 pm

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): The electors of Enfield will soon have the opportunity by their votes of expressing their appreciation of the manner in which my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State has served them while sustaining a heavy burden in his Department and in foreign parts.

The debt of the people of these islands to Irish fighting men is immeasurable. There is no mention of airmen in the Bill's title because the land trust was set up to help those who fought in the great war of 1914 to 1918, and their dependants. When the Bill was given a Second Reading in another place, Lord Denning recalled seeing Lord Ypres, then Sir John French, at the front. That field marshal, during recruiting tours of Ireland, promised that volunteers would be provided with housing after the war. Hence the trust. Now that the main function of the fund has come to an end, it is to be diverted to other beneficial purposes, as my hon. Friend described.

Together with the lifeboat service of all Ireland and other cherished institutions, the Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust is one of those bodies which, despite partition, plays its part throughout Ireland and embraces representatives of the Governments of the kingdom and of the Republic in what my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister describes as the "unique relationship".

I should like to ask the Minister about the allocation of the assets. The Bill provides for two fifths of the 68 per cent. share held by Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to be made available. What is the basis of that computation? Why should five fifths not be distributed after allowing for administrative expenses?

I am glad that the distributing agency is to be the Royal British Legion, of which a number of us in the House are members. It is appropriate that Earl Haig should have spoken in the Second Reading debate in the House of Lords.

Like the trust, the Legion overleaps the Irish border. In Northern Ireland, the Legion is pre-eminent in poppy day collections and it is also active in the South. When the Irish Free State was established as a dominion in 1922, it was proposed to form an Irish Legion, but Irish old comrades insisted that the name British Legion be retained. There are still a number of British Legion branches throughout the Irish Republic. That is strange because the Irish Free State was set up as a dominion modelled on Canada. There is a Royal Canadian Legion but in the Irish Republic the name British Legion remains.

In the other place Lord Killanin said that the new arrangements had the blessing of the new Taoiseach. Mr. Haughey, like his predecessor Dr. FitzGerald, assured the noble Lord that the money would not be snapped up and put into the Treasury, but that it would be spent wisely. The Secretary of State will ensure that it is spent wisely for the benefit of the veterans and their dependants.

In the debate to which I have referred the noble Lord Prys-Davies put certain questions to my right hon. Friend the Baroness Young. My right hon. and noble Friend replied to most of those questions, but there are two questions, found in column 1425 of the Lords *Hansard* of 28 April 1987, to which my right hon. and noble Friend gave no answer. Doubtless no answer was given because those questions are not for the Foreign and Commonweath Office, but for the Northern Ireland Office and the Department of Health and Social Security. Doubtless the Minister will be writing to the Lord Prys-Davies and, if so, the hon. Member for Epping Forest will also be interested in those replies.

I am grateful for this opportunity to say a word of gratitude to those Irish men and women to whom we owe so much.

Mr. Eggar: First, I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison) for his remarks about me. It is absolutely typical of my hon. Friend that it was he who, during the business statement, asked that efforts should be made by parties on all sides of the House to get this Bill through in the closing days of this Parliament. It is also typical of my hon. Friend that he should, quite rightly, pay tribute to the tremendous contribution that was made by Irishmen, on both sides of the border, during the first world war and of course subsequently.

The hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) asked about the amount of the trust. Leaving aside sufficient money for the prudent management of the remaining houses, the trust estimates an initial surplus of £4·5 million. That and any subsequent smaller surpluses will be shared between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland in proportion to the original contribution made by the United Kingdom and the Irish Free State. Two fifths of the British share will be paid to a distributory agency for the benefit of former members of the British armed forces and their dependants resident in Ireland.

My hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest asked about the percentage of the share that is going back to the British Government and the trustees. That percentage was agreed upon after negotiations between the Government, the trustees and the Royal British Legion. I assure my hon.

[Mr. Eggar]

Friend that the arrangements, finally arrived at, have received strong support from the trustees and the Royal British Legion.

We believe that this Bill strikes a fair balance,between the interests of the contributing Governments and, on our side, between the Government and former members of the British armed forces and their dependants. I strongly commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Further proceeding postponed, pursuant to the order of the House this day.

WAYS AND MEANS

Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Bill *[Lords]*

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Bill *[Lords]*, it is expedient to authorise payments into the Consolidated Fund.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Bill *[Lords]*

Considered in Committee.

[SIR PAUL DEAN *in the Chair*]

Clauses 1 and 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3

SHORT TITLE, COMMENCEMENT, REPEALS AND EXTENT

5.5 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I beg to move amendment No. 1, in page 2, line 36, leave out subsection (5).

The amendment is designed purely to delete the privilege amendment made in another place.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment; as amended, considered.

Bill read the Third time and passed, with an amendment.

Territorial Sea Bill *[Lords]*

Considered in Committee.

[SIR PAUL DEAN *in the Chair*]

Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4

SHORT TITLE, COMMENCEMENT AND EXTENT

Amendment made: No. 2, in page 3, line 45, leave out subsection (5).—*[Mr. Eggar.]*

Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedules 1 and 2 agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment; as amended, considered.

Order for Third Reading read.

5.7 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

This is a short, technical Bill that has been welcomed by both sides of the House and by the other place. That general support is valuable, because it is an important Bill despite its technical aspects. It will mean that legislation that applies in the 3-mile limit will, in general, apply in the wider limit. This will cover, in particular, the prosecution in United Kingdom ports of owners and masters of vessels who discharge oil or infringe traffic separation schemes, shipping accidents giving rise to pollution, and arrests for smuggling.

I should like to mention two specific points. The first was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims), who expressed some concern that the extension of the territorial sea would place an additional burden on the policing authorities of Kent and Essex. I assure my hon. Friend that we consulted all the Government Departments concerned with administration and enforcement in the terroritorial sea. We reached the conclusion that the expense in these matters would not significantly increase. Departments are satisfied that such activities as they consider necessary in the remoter belt of waters from 3 to 12 miles will not significantly alter the general pattern of expenditure or calls on authorities.

I also want to mention a point about the extension of the Bill's provisions to the Isle of Man, which the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell)—he has given me notice that he is unable to be present tonight—raised with me. I am sure the House will agree that it is proper to follow the usual route of close consultation with the Isle of Man authorities on the issue of the territorial sea around the island and, in particular, on that of fishing there, which I understand to be the right hon. Gentleman's main concern. I assure the House that we remain determined that the arrangements for the conservation and management of fisheries in those waters should not, in any way, be to the detriment of fishermen in the United Kingdom, and I include Northern Ireland in that.

I should not go too far ahead of the consultations with the Government of the Isle of Man, but the Government recognise that the House will wish to be informed about the extension of the territorial sea adjacent to the islands, and I undertake that the House will be so informed.

Having made those two small points, I ask the House to give the Bill its Third Reading.

5.11 pm

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): It is entirely appropriate that we have had a smooth passage from a Bill dealing with Irish sailors to the Territorial Sea Bill. It has been a pleasure for the Opposition to help with both measures.

We have given the Bill a general welcome, here and in the other place, but we have expressed some reservations about it. I am grateful to the Minister for his answers in Committee and subsequently. However, we are still concerned that some provisions will be introduced by Orders in Council, although, as the Minister made clear on Second Reading, they will be technical. We do not like the procedure of delegating to the Privy Council the power to enact legislation that should properly be dealt with by the House. We would prefer the Bill to legislate now for the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. We recognise the need for close consultation, and we recognise the power that the House has to legislate on these matters for the small islands off the shore of the United Kingdom, including those with special constitutional relationships to it.

We regret that the Government have not seen fit to accept all the provisions of the United Nations convention on the law of the sea, and have accepted only this one. We wish to register our regret that the extension to cover marine nature reserves has not been included in the Bill.

We still believe that there is a degree of complacency about the threat to fishing vessels from submarines, which we reckon will be increased by the extra area that is covered by the provisions of the Bill. We hope that other Ministers—I know that this is not the responsibility of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office — will take account of that.

Finally, in spite of the clear and categorical assurances that the Minister so kindly gave to his hon. Friend the Member for Medway (Dame P. Fenner) on Second Reading, there is still a wide misunderstanding that the Bill will affect the arrangements for the sale of duty-free liquor and other goods on cross-Channel ferries. It would be appropriate for the Minister to try to dispel that concern once and for all. It seems much more prevalent on the Conservative Benches, for reasons that I can quite understand. It would be helpful if the Minister would make it clear that when the Bill becomes an Act tomorrow it will have no effect whatever on the purchase and subsequent enjoyment of duty-free goods on ships.

With those reservations, and the search for that assurance, we generally welcome the Bill and look forward to the return of a Labour Government to implement its provisions.

5.15 pm

Dame Peggy Fenner (Medway): In Committee my hon. Friend the Minister was kind enough to give me the assurance to which the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) referred. Because my hon. Friend's Department is not responsible for Customs and Excise matters, he gave me a copy of a press release from Customs and Excise that confirms what he said in Committee.

I am sure that the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley is right when he says that there is still some concern about the matter. We have a large number of ferry ships in my home county and constituency. The constituency has a close connection with ports and the sea, and merchant men there have expressed this concern to me. At what point does a ferry master close the duty-free office if the 3-mile limit no longer obtains? It always closes at that point because of the territorial sea limit. I draw my hon. Friend's attention to the fact that if a vessel was 12 miles out from this country and 12 miles out from France, those on board would sell little duty-free merchandise.

I thank my hon. Friend for the great trouble that he took to reassure me in Committee, and if he can give any further reassurance, I know that the ferry men and merchant men in my constituency will be grateful.

5.18 pm

Mr. Michael Brown (Brigg and Cleethorpes): I was unable to take part in the Second Reading debate on the Bill, which, of course, is greatly welcomed in my constituency. It has a long seaboard and is bounded by the North sea and the Humber estuary, where there are often a large number of oil tankers and ships from all over the world. My hon. Friend will know of the discharge of oil in our waters by the foreign tanker Sivand in 1983. That was handled by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry, the hon. Member for Pudsey (Mr. Shaw), when he was the responsible Minister in another Department. The great joy, from the point of view of my constituency, is that, now that legislation is to be put on the statute book tomorrow, we shall have the opportunity to seek some redress.

The Humber estuary, as I have said, is thick with sea traffic carrying hazardous material, and many oil tankers. There have been discharges in the past, and we are most grateful to the Government for introducing the Bill. I thank my hon. Friend for what he has done to see it safely through the House.

5.19 pm

Mr. Eggar: I thank the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) and the Opposition for supporting the Bill. Many of the detailed reservations that the hon. Gentleman has expressed were those that he expressed in Committee. I understand them, but, on balance, the Bill deals with the issues in the appropriate way.

I wish to tell my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) that I appreciate the point about the benefits that the Bill will bring to his constituents and to many other constituents who are affected by pollution from the sea. There are clearly significant benefits in being able to extend the provisions of our law, which previously applied only to the 3-mile limit, to 12 miles.

Finally, I refer to the point made by the hon. Friend the Member for Medway (Dame P. Fenner) and the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley about duty-free liquor and its supply on cross-Channel ferries. I can state categorically that the Bill makes no difference to the present procedure on ferries. Customs and Excise has stated publicly that, for sound practical reasons, it has long accepted that bars and shops on board ships sailing to foreign ports may be opened once connection with the shore has been severed. The extension of the territorial limit from 3 to 12 miles will therefore have no effect.

I hope that all those doubters who, we are told, surround the bars of our ports — there are even some such doubters inland in my constituency — will be

[Mr. Eggar]

reassured by that. It is with some pleasure that I realise that my final contribution to this Parliament has been to give such a vital assurance.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed, with an amendment.

Statutory Instruments, &c.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With the agreement of the House, I shall put together motions 6 to 13 on the Order Paper.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND)

That the draft Definition of Capital Expenses (Scotland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 1st April, be approved.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

That the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (Area and Constitution) Order 1987, dated 2nd April 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th April, be approved.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

That the Black Country Development Corporation (Area and Constitution) Order 1987, dated 2nd April 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 8th April, be approved.

RACE RELATIONS

That the draft Race Relations (Offshore Employment) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 1st May, be approved.

SEX DISCRIMINATION

That the draft Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay (Offshore Employment) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 1st May, be approved.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

That the Teeside Development Corporation (Area and Constitution) Order 1987, dated 13th April 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 27th April, be approved.

AGRICULTURE

That the Home Grown Cereals Authority Levy Scheme (Approval) Order 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 671), dated 6th April 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 8th April, be approved.

RATING AND VALUATION

That the New Valuation Lists Order 1987, dated 31st March 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 7th April, be approved.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

Question agreed to.

Registered Establishments (Scotland) Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Clause 1

DEFINITION OF "ESTABLISHMENTS"

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 1, line 18, leave out "63A" and insert "63B".

5.20 pm

Mr. David Knox (Staffordshire, Moorlands): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this, it will be convenient also to consider Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 6.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): The Government are happy to accept the amendment and pleased to see progress being made with the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 6 agreed to.

Clause 4

JOINTLY REGISTRABLE ESTABLISHMENTS

Lords amendment: No. 7, in page 7, line 2, leave out "1(2)" and insert "1A(a)".

Mr. Knox: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendment No. 8.

Mrs. Currie: The Government are happy to accept the amendment.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 8 agreed to.

Health Services (Islington)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

5.21 pm

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): It is something of a privilege to be able to speak on the Adjournment of the House at such an early hour in the afternoon. I suspect that the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie), the Under-Secretary of State, will not thank me for this, because I believe that there is a queue of further Adjournment debates to which I suspect she will respond, happily and willing as ever.

In raising the issue of health care for the elderly in Islington, it is worth reflecting for a moment on the background to what has happened to the health services in the borough of Islington, part of which I have the honour to represent in this place, since the Government came into office. For example, we have lost the entire casualty department at the Royal Northern hospital. It is much missed and much lamented by my constituents. Within the Islington district health authority the waiting list in September 1982 stood at 1,098. In March 1986 it stood at 2,410. That was an increase of 119 per cent., the greatest increase over that period of any health authority in the London area.

I fear that the position since 1986 has become worse. It is worse particularly for prospective patients who are awaiting urgent operations. The number of people within the Islington district waiting more than a month for urgent treatment amounts to 83 per cent. of the total. That puts the Islington district health authority in 182nd place out of the 191 health authorities. The figures for the Bloomsbury health authority, which adjoins the Islington health authority, and which has some responsibility for the care of elderly patients in the Islington area, are far and away the worst of any health authority. The hospital waiting list is the worst in England, and Bloomsbury takes 191st place, there being 191 local authorities.

That is the background on waiting lists, and the rhetoric from the Prime Minister and from the Government generally about the Health Service being safe in their hands and about spending more in real terms on it now than in 1979 falls on unreceptive ears among my constituents. Their experience is of a Health Service that is severely in decline. They are waiting longer and they are suffering as a result. The Islington draft operational plan reveals that there is to be a reduction by 1993 in the number of acute beds that are available. From 1983 to 1985 the number decreased from 982 to 812, and it is set to be reduced further to 659 by 1993. That is the draft operational plan that has been established by the Islington health authority. Sadly, it is not alone in facing the prospect of further decline among inner London districts.

Earlier this year the King's Fund, an independent agency, produced a report on the planned health services in inner London. It was called "Back to back planning". It revealed, among other rather frightening facts, that there was no coherent and comprehensive picture on inner London's health needs available from reading the reports, plans and future strategies of the four regional health authorities that between them cover inner London.

[Mr. Chris Smith]

Another issue that it raised was extremely worrying, and the 12 chairmen of the district health authorities that cover inner London set out the position starkly in the foreword to the report. They wrote:

> "Regional plans for inner London Districts require a reduction of £109 million"—

a reduction of 12·9 per cent,—

> "in the period from 1983-84 to 1993-94; this is equivalent to the combined annual cost of St. Thomas', St. Bartholomews and the Royal Free Hospitals."

Those are three major teaching hospitals. The equivalent cost of the three hospitals put together is expected to be taken out of the health budget for inner London over the 10 years from 1983-1993. That is the background against which I raise this debate.

Lengthening waiting lists, reductions in the number of acute beds and future cuts in funding for inner London health authorities affect severely the elderly in my constituency. My constituency has a higher than average number of elderly people, especially elderly people living alone. Many of them need proper and decent health care, but, unfortunately, they are not getting it.

Primary health facilities do not constitute the only problem. There are other areas of the Health Service that cause me to be concerned. The London ambulance service is one of them, and I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) will be raising the issue in greater detail later this afternoon. Last summer the London ambulance service cut drastically the number of non-urgent journeys that it was prepared to undertake. It claims now that the number of non-urgent journeys is increasing, and there is some slight evidence of improvement, but last summer there were drastic cuts in non-urgent journeys. The sector of the population most affected by those cuts are the elderly, with their transport to day centres and the difficulties that they have in getting out of their homes. The elderly in my constituency are faced with the problem of a health and ambulance service that is fundamentally in decline.

To add to that difficulty, for many years we have not known precisely where the responsibility for the planning of health services for the population of south Islington has lain with the Bloomsbury district health authority, which has supposedly been responsible for planning hospital services for the elderly. Sadly, althouth it has had that responsibility, and although supposedly within the funding that has been made available to it by central Government some account has been taken of that responsibility, it has not been exercising it.

It was nonsense in the first place for a portion of the health responsibility of one area to rest in the hands of a health authority for a different area. It may be adjacent, but none the less it was not a health authority that covered that part of the population. The people of Finsbury and the southern part of Islington were falling between two stools. Primarily they looked to Islington district health authority for support and assistance, but that health authority was not funded to provide it; Bloomsbury health authority was funded to provide it, but unfortunately it did not do so. To make matters worse, much of the population, especially in Finsbury, expected St. Bartholomew's hospital to provide hospital care for them, but St. Bartholomew's is run and administered by the City and Hackney health authority, which was yet a third health authority involved in the confused picture in the provision of hospital services for the elderly in south Islington.

For several years I have been endeavouring to establish exactly where the responsibility lies, who is prepared to take it up, and where the funding should be directed. It seems that some small amount of progress is being made. I wrote to the Minister some weeks ago specifically about where the precise responsibility for hospital services for the elderly in south Islington lies, should lie and where, in the Government's view, it should lie in the future. Should it lie with Islington district health authority, which is presumably the logical place to put it? Should it lie with the City and Hackney health authority because St. Bartholomew's hospital is run by it and is the hospital that is immediately adjacent to the boundary? Should it lie with Bloomsbury health authority, which has had the responsibility for funding up until now?

I received a very helpful letter, not from the Minister, but from the chairman of the North East Thames regional health authority, who the Minister had asked to reply on her behalf. I was pleased to read the first sentence of the second paragraph of that letter. He said:

> "I acknowledge that Services for the Elderly in South Islington are inadequate."

It is extremely good to have received that clear statement of the problem in writing from the chairman of the regional health authority. He went on:

> "I am delighted that some progress has now been made and that there is agreement between Bloomsbury, Islington and City and Hackney Health Authorities about how to deliver improved services. The Regional Health Authority has also agreed to allocate some resources to ensure the planned improvements."

I shall return to that point, because the information that I hope the Minister will give us this afternoon is exactly what planned improvements there are and what funds are coming from which authority.

The chairman continued:

> "The Health Authorities acknowledge that GPs refer elderly, acutely ill patients living in South Islington to St. Bartholomew's Hospital and City and Hackney District, with capital support from the Regional Health Authority, has agreed to provide an acute assessment ward designated for this purpose which should be available in 1989."

So far, so good. What happens—this is my first specific question to the Minister—between now and 1989? A specifically designated ward in St. Bartholomew's hospital in 1989 is welcome, but between now and then where should GPs refer elderly patients who come from south Islington who are acutely ill and require hospital treatment?

The chairman continued:

> "There is agreement also that longer stay health service provision should be provided by Islington Health Authority to complement the range of services provided by the London Borough of Islington."

I am glad to receive that assurance from the chairman of the regional health authority, but I suspect that he has forgotten that the London borough of Islington is a rate-capped authority and therefore will find it impossible to devote additional resources to assist in this process. He also seems to have forgotten that with the impending closure of Friern Barnet hospital many patients from that hospital will be returning into the Islington community over the next five or six years and for whom joint provision by the health authority and borough will have to be made. That will be a major drain on resources and funds, and to envisage, at the same time as that is occurring, provision being made for the longer stay health needs of the elderly is stretching credulity. It will require a major injection of funding into the health authorities and the borough to ensure that those needs are properly met.

My second specific question to the Minister is in relation to the longer stay Health Service provision. What funds will be made available to enable Islington health authority and Islington borough council to provide between them the sort of service that the chairman of the regional health authority envisaged? What funding will be available to enable that to happen in full and proper form?

My third specific question to the Minister relates to the agreement between Bloomsbury, Islington and City and Hackney, which is referred to in the earlier paragraph of the chairman's letter. Obviously, that agreement is welcome. It is long overdue and it is about time that the three district health authorities and the region agreed a strategy on what to do about patients who need proper hospital provision, proper planning of their health needs and a way of meeting them.

What are the precise terms of that agreement? How much funding will come from each of the three district health authorities, and how much funding will come from the regional health authority to provide these improved services? What improvement will occur? At present, many elderly patients from south Islington are dealt with at St. Bartholomew's hospital, but from where will the improvement come? Some improvement may be coming with the new ward in 1989, but what will happen between now and then?

A rather ominous note was set in the middle of an appendix to one of the recent reports to the district health authority meeting in Islington, which referred to possible cuts in provision for the elderly in southern Islington. A number of figures were set out beside the figure for possible cuts. The figures related to the three district health authorities. I should dearly like to know from the Minister exactly how much funding will come from the three district health authorities, and how much will come from the region, to cope with the health and hospital needs of elderly people in the southern part of my constituency. They need and deserve better treatment than they are getting at the moment.

I look forward to hearing the Minister's specific replies to my questions and also her commitment to a rather better future for my constituents' health needs and health facilities than they have had for any of the past eight years. I look forward to hearing what the Minister has to say. I hope that she will give some comfort.

These are the dying days of the Government. The Government will shortly be replaced by a Labour Government who are determined to support the Health Service, particularly in inner areas such as Islington, to a much greater extent and with much greater care for the needs of people than the present Government have shown. I hope that the Government, even in their dying days, will relent and that we will have a deathbed conversion to the principle of proper funding for our health services and a proper way to meet the needs of elderly people—my constituents—who deserve a much better deal than they are getting at the moment.

5.41 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I congratulate the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on his efforts to publicise the needs and concerns of his constituents. He wrote to me on 25 February 1987. I am deeply hurt that he failed to acknowledge that I wrote back. Indeed, I have a letter dated 18 March, which I shall read. As a result of that correspondence, I have a great deal of progress to report on some of the specific issues that he has raised. Indeed, since this debate is a little earlier in the evening than usual, I shall have the opportunity to report some progress in a wider area of interest; that is, the care of and the level of services for the elderly that the Government have been able to provide, and some aspects of care, particularly in the Islington health authority.

The hon. Gentleman is quite right: the number of acute beds has been reduced. Even now, however, the total number of acute beds in London for its population runs at twice the national average and about two and a half times the level of acute beds for the population of outer London. That is for the obvious reason that the population of London has shifted. Indeed, about 2·5 million people have left central London in the years since the war. However, on the whole, the health services have continued to maintain the pattern that was established 100 years ago and subsequently. Therefore, in any calculation of acute services for the population, London has been substantially over-provided. I am not the first Minister who has said it, and it has not been only Conservative Ministers who have said it. It has been said for some time.

The plan to lose some 1,500 acute beds over the 10-year period from 1984 to 1994, which was actively debated a short time ago in the regional health authorities and the district health authorities, has been put into operation rather faster than anybody expected. Three years into a 10-year programme, 1,100 beds out of the 1,500 beds have already gone. It is realistic to state that that rapid changeover has brought some of the problems that the hon. Gentleman has described.

However, there are two aspects. The first is that, in many cases, acute beds have been replaced by geriatric services, and some of the developments that I shall describe are of exactly that kind. Our elderly people fill half the acute beds in the country, but it does not automatically follow that they are getting the best service that they need by remaining in the acute side of the service. Where, as in much of London, the geriatric service has been inadequate and the acute service was over-provided, the switch from acute to geriatric has been widely recognised as necessary and sensible. The problem has been the speed with which some of it has happened rather than the pattern of change.

Mr. Chris Smith *indicated assent.*

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Gentleman agrees. Since he entered the House, he has taken a keen and intelligent interest in the subject. He would recognise that to have gone in the opposite direction — to have diminished geriatric services and to have increased acute services—would not have been sensible.

Secondly, in many parts of London much better general practitioner services are reducing some of the pressure on hospitals. We are particularly pleased to see that, in one or two places, better GP work is resulting in far fewer requirements for people, particularly elderly people, to be admitted to hospital. In other words, they are getting better care and service from their GPs. I am sure that they

[Mrs. Currie]

welcome that—I certainly do. We hope to see rather more of the same, not just in London and not just for elderly people, but all over the country.

We recognise the special difficulties in London—I say that as a Member from the Trent health authority area. Two important studies are under way. They should bear fruit in some of the directions that the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues would want. We recognise that simply comparing London's needs with its population does not work for London because its population swells with commuters. One is attempting, in many parts of the London region or regions, to provide two lots of health services because people want them at home in Kent, Sussex, Bedfordshire, or wherever they live, and also in London, where they work. If someone collapses with a heart attack at Waterloo station, he will not promptly be taken back to his district hospital 30 miles away, but will be treated in one of the main London hospitals, and he will get good service. That fact is recognised. Detailed studies are under way as to how that might properly be calculated. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman realises that they are far-reaching discussions. That matter is now being looked at with some care.

The other major study that is under way is about patterns of nurse recruitment in London and the difficulties in recruiting and retaining nurses in London, which might be rather different from some of the problems in the rest of the country. I think we now recognise how serious a problem accommodation is in some parts of London. The results from some studies will come to us shortly. We hope that we shall be able to make some announcements on that matter.

The hon. Gentleman might care to look at the *Official Report* of last Friday's Adjournment debate about Newham health authority. He may find that it is not only a problem about nursing but that there are one or two problems in a wide range of services. We are aware of the problems and we are determined to ensure that we have adequate information and some decent long-term studies on which sensible decisions can be made.

I turn now to services for elderly people in the country as a whole. There are now about 10 million pensioners. We now have a higher proportion of pensioners than any other major country except Sweden. Our pensioners are living longer—we are all living longer. The life expectancy of a baby girl born today is 81 years. That is a tribute to the Health Service and the quality of services provided by it. It is a tribute to better housing and better prosperity all round, much of which, thank goodness, pensioners are also able to enjoy.

In regard to the Health Service and local authority services for the elderly, I am glad to report some substantial improvements since 1978-79, when last there was a Government of the colour that I suspect that the hon. Gentleman might prefer to see after the election. Under our Government very substantial improvements have been recorded and it is worth putting them on record. My figures are for England. The number of elderly people treated in geriatric units has increased substantially, as in-patients by some 60 per cent. and as out-patients by some 40 per cent., between 1978 and 1985. Nearly 400,000 elderly people are treated every year as in-patients in geriatric departments. They are therefore getting the service that they particularly need. Day hospital attendance has risen by nearly 20 per cent. in the same period. Indeed, some 1·6 million old people regularly attend day hospitals.

We have seen increases in hospital staffing. The number of consultant geriatricians rose by nearly 50 per cent. between 1978 and 1986, and we now have nearly 500 whole-time equivalent consultant geriatricians in a sphere that used to be the Cinderella service in which very few people wished to work. Similarly, the number of nurses caring for geriatric patients between 1978 and 1985 increased by 22 per cent. We now have nearly 45,000 such whole-time equivalents working for the elderly.

Of course, the vast majority of the elderly are cared for in the community. The community health services have also seen improvements. The number of district nurses has jumped by 18 per cent. The number of elderly people treated in their own homes by district nurses is 1·6 million every year. That is a remarkable achievement. That figure has increased by 28 per cent. under this Government. About 74 per cent. of district nurses' time and nearly 90 per cent. of auxiliaries' time in the community is spent caring for elderly patients.

We do not neglect either the problems of mobility. The number of chiropodists treating the elderly has risen. The total number has gone up by nearly 24 per cent. and the number of elderly people treated by National Health Service salaried and sessional chiropodists is up by 25 per cent. to 1·5 million a year. That is a remarkable tribute to all the staff concerned.

Turning to local authority provision, we find a slightly more mixed pattern and perhaps not quite as much growth, but local authority provision is not entirely under our control in the way that the Health Service is. Local authority provision for the elderly has to compete with other interests in many local authorities. Islington is one with such important bodies as a peace committee, a women's committee and other such committees. In some parts of the country local authority provision has not risen quite as fast as the health care provision——

Mr. Chris Smith: I must intervene momentarily to correct the hon. Lady. For a start, there is no peace committee or any such entity in Islington borough council. There is a women's committee which does extremely good work on health and safety issues which worry many women in the constituency.

Mrs. Currie: I suspect that the elderly women in the constituency might prefer more home helps, but that is an opinion from one who was a Birmingham city councillor for 11 years.

I noticed last week, following the hammering that the Labour party got in the city of Birmingham when its majority was slashed by some 10 votes on the city council, that the first thing the Labour leader of the council, Mr. Dick Knowles, did was to abolish the women's committee and the race committee and take issue strongly with those who felt that it was wise to have them. He said that he had intended to abolish them anyway; it was just pure coincidence that he did so the day after a disastrous election.

On local authority provision for the country as a whole, I am delighted to report that between 1979 and 1985 the number of places in day centres went up by 15 per cent. and nearly 22,000 elderly people can go to day centres each day. Since people do not go every day, obviously that provision is available to more than 22,000 people over a week.

The number of meals served through the meals on wheels service has risen to 43 million a year; 70 per cent. of the meals are served to people in their own homes. The number of home helps has gone up by 14 per cent. There are now some 53,000 full-time equivalents. As most home helps are part-timers, that is a substantial army of people helping the elderly to stay in their own homes. We have also seen overall an improvement in residential care, not through the local authority service but mainly through the increased provision of excellent residential care in the private sector.

Islington district health authority, as the hon. Gentleman knows, is chaired by a former Member of the House, Mr. Eric Moonman, and a very good job he is doing. If we look through some of the funding and other developments in that health authority, evidence may be called in aid against the broad case that the hon. Gentleman tried to put. The gross revenue expenditure of the health authority in 1985-86, for example, was a shade under £45 million. This year the initial cash allocation for that health authority has risen to nearly £51 million. That is a substantial increase in a period of barely two years. I know that the authority will use it wisely under Mr. Moonman's guidance.

Between 1985-86 and this year the authority has had some £7 million in capital. The result is that it is looking after more patients. Between 1982 and 1985, the most recent year for which I have figures, the number of in-patient cases treated in Islington went up from 26,900 to 28,200 and the number of cases treated on a day basis went up from 2,500 to 3,500. I have examined the performance indicators for similar authorities and it may be possible to look after more patients on a day basis. In some parts of the country surgeons find that 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. of the kind of cases done in Islington can be carried out on a day surgery basis. In Islington the percentage is still small. The most popular area of day surgery is still less than 20 per cent. of the total. So that there is scope for doing more.

In one branch of particular interest to the elderly, trauma and orthopaedics, there has been a substantial increase in the number of cases that the authority is able to look after. In 1982, the number of in-patient cases was 1,700. In 1985 it was up to 2,100. Therefore, many hundreds of additional elderly people in Islington have been assisted in that way.

The number of people being treated at home has remained steady. Health visitors and home nurses can give a good service. I suspect that the hon. Gentleman is right in saying that the proportion of elderly in the neighbourhood is high. Perhaps it is slightly higher than the average because the death rate from ischaemic heart disease and cerebral vascular disease is lower than the national average. Islington is doing well on prevention, and I congratulate it on that.

As for the responsibility for the care of the elderly in Islington, and particularly in the hon. Gentleman's constituency, he is right in saying that there is a frightful muddle. In addition to community services, Islington health authority is responsible for hospital services for the elderly in north Islington and also in Hornsey within the boundaries of Haringey health authority. Responsibility for hospital services for the elderly in south Islington and the Finsbury area lies at present with Bloomsbury health authority. But because of the proximity of the hospital for acute admissions many patients are sent to St. Bartholomew's hospital, which is within the City of London and Hackney health authority. I count four health authorities so far, with the regional health authority taking a close interest in what goes on, of course.

I therefore wrote to the hon. Gentleman on 18 March 1987, in response to his letter, saying:

> "As you say, this would seem to be a matter for agreement between the various District Health Authorities concerned. I have therefore written to David Berriman, Chairman of the North East Thames Regional Health Authority, asking him to reply to you direct about this matter at the same time as reporting to me."

I am therefore happy to recognise that perhaps the Department had some small role in encouraging the progress since February.

It is accepted that the provision of health services to the elderly people of south Islington is unsatisfactory. Discussions have been taking place for a short time now between officers of the three district health authorities mainly concerned—that is, Bloomsbury, City of London and Hackney and Islington — and the regional health authority about the provision of hospital services to the elderly of the area. Progress is being made in these discussions and there is now agreement in principle about how improved services should be provided in south Islington.

The hon. Gentleman asked me specifically what funds there will be in future for the health and local authorities. I shall give him some detailed figures for the health authority schemes that are under active discussion right now.

For local authorities as a whole this year 1 per cent. additional funding has been given for community care of all kinds, and that has amounted to some £27 million. How they spend it is up to them, because most local authorities resist being told specifically what to do. It is a convention that Ministers do not commit the Government too wildly about future funding in the weeks leading up to a general election. It will therefore depend, I suspect, on the outcome of the coming election. I have no doubt that whoever is the Member for Islington after the election is likely to be invited to the opening of some of the establishments and wards that I am about to describe. I hope that the hon. Gentleman may also have the opportunity of attending.

First, there will be £180,000 for community services in south Islington. I understand that the North East Thames regional health authority is permitting the Islington health authority to retain half the efficiency savings that will be developed this year, and that will be about £180,000. The emphasis will be on community services for the elderly in south Islington. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will be in touch with the chairman of the health authority and will hear from him in some detail precisely how that additional money is to be spent.

Since, as the hon. Gentleman said, many elderly, acutely ill patients living in south Islington are referred to Bart's, which is in the City of London and Hackney health authority, the regional health authority has allocated £250,000 capital for an acute geriatric assessment ward at Bart's, which I have no doubt will give his constituents some of the finest care and treatment available in this country and possibly in the world. The ward will have up to 25 beds and it is planned to open it in 1989.

[Mrs. Currie]

However, I take the hon. Gentleman's point and I will ask the regional health authority to give further consideration to the care of these patients in the intervening period. It may be possible to look after these patients in existing facilities that might be not quite as acceptable as the most modern facilities while the additional money is being spent. I undertake to ask the regional health authority to take a look at that.

In addition, the North East Thames regional health authority will be providing £400,000 for Southwood ward at the Hornsey central hospital, which should also be of assistance to elderly people in the neighbourhood. This is subject to detailed agreement on the content of the scheme.

There is also an urban programme bid in for a day hospital of which perhaps the hon. Gentleman is aware. I understand that the Islington health authority has made an application to the Department of the Environment for urban programme funding for a 20-place geriatric day hospital at the Whittington hospital, at a capital cost of some £750,000—they do not come cheap in London—and I understand that this bid is currently being considered. The urban programme funding would provide day hospital facilities in the Archway wing at Whittington, where associated geriatric wards are already sited, so it would be a good location.

I was very interested to hear of Islington's joint policy on the care of the elderly and I know that a great deal of detailed work has gone into that. I have read the joint policy, and I hope that as much as possible will come to fruition. It is very encouraging to see evidence of such close co-operation between a district health authority and a local authority and such commitment to the development of community care services.

We think that in taking that work forward the district health authority could make rather more use of the performance indicators now available for services for the elderly and also of the balance-of-care planning system which has been developed by my Department and was made available from 31 March 1987. What I am saying is that there are now management tools available that may assist health and local authorities in the planning of their services, particularly when they are going into new areas, as these are hoping to do. I am willing to make officials' time available to the local health authority and the local council to ensure that they are able to plan their services along the best possible lines.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to debate this subject tonight. I look forward to seeing the hon. Gentleman once again in the House, perhaps not for Islington — that will be for the voters of Islington to decide — but I am quite certain that it will be a Conservative Minister answering him.

National Health Service

6.8 pm

Mr. Michael Brown (Brigg and Cleethorpes): I am very glad to have this opportunity of initiating this Adjournment debate on increased expenditure in the National Health Service.

There is no doubt, even though some may be expressed on the Opposition Benches, that the statistics on the public expenditure that the Government have devoted to the National Health Service show that their record is second to none. I shall be adducing in my speech not only the statistics available nationally but personal experience as the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes, which covers the health authorities of Grimsby and Scunthorpe, of visiting those authorities and the authorities on a regular basis.

When I was elected to the House for the newly created constituency of Brigg and Cleethorpes on 9 June 1983, one of the first invitations that I received from the Grimsby district health authority was to attend the opening of the brand new Grimsby district hospital in July 1983. The opening ceremony was performed by Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales and was attended by me, the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) and a large number of local dignatories. We had the opportunity to see for ourselves the results of the Conservative Government's commitment to the Health Service between 1979 and 1983. That hospital was built as part of the capital programme of the Conservative Administration elected in 1979.

I have no doubt that in the coming election campaign we shall see statistics relating to hospital closures in Great Grimsby. Of course, there have been hospital closures there; we closed down the disgraceful 19th century hospital and opened a brand new one. That is the point that has to be borne in mind when the Labour party draws attention to hospital closures. In my constituency, we have a spanking new district hospital which is second to none in the United Kingdom and probably in the whole of western Europe. It has magnificent facilities.

I visited that hospital when it was opened and have had personal experience of it since, and there is a very good story about this. Usually a Member of Parliament visits his local hospital officially to discuss matters with the hospital board, on a formal occasion, as a patient or to see friends or colleagues who are patients. Since 1983, I have had some experience of the work of the hospital. In January 1986, my next-door neighbour fell over and required immediate and urgent casualty treatment. I was with him when he arrived at the hospital, and I saw the magnificent work that was done to repair his injuries. He was not discharged that afternoon; he was told that, although his condition was not serious, he would be kept in overnight. That gives the lie to the claims about pressure on hospital beds. It was, after all, probably not technically or medically necessary for my neighbour to have been kept in overnight.

In autumn 1985, my agent suffered a mild problem with her leg. She was detained in Grimsby district hospital for several weeks. Again, it was probably medically possible for her to have been discharged a little earlier than she was. In fact, she spent several weeks in the hospital, and I visited her about twice a week.

There is no better way for a Member of Parliament to get the feel of how the Health Service is working than by visiting his agent in hospital. There she was, conducting some written business to the best of her ability, and transacting business with me. Everyone in the ward knew who she was and who I was, but no special treatment was given to her simply because she was my agent, and neither she nor I would have expected that.

Both my agent and I can only confirm the fantastic care and attention to detail in the wards of the Grimsby hospital. Visiting the hospital twice a week for five or six weeks, I got to know the sisters on the ward, and the catering and cleaning staff. The people at the reception desk get to know the regular visitor, and he has a feel for the way in which the hospital is working. I have nothing but praise for the way in which that hospital looked after my friend and agent—who, I am delighted to say, has returned to full and radiant health, and is looking forward to the next few weeks. Those weeks will be the greatest test of the success of Grimsby district health authority. I know that my agent will succeed in getting through the election campaign full of fitness and vigour, which I can only put down to the first-rate treatment that she received from the National Health Service in Grimsby district hospital.

As I said, my constituency also includes the Scunthorpe area health authority. When my constituents living in the Brigg area require hospital treatment, they go to Scunthorpe general hospital. Four or five weeks ago, I attended a meeting with the chairman of the health authority, along with my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Hickmet), and we went to look at the massive new building expansion programme in progress at the hospital. Many millions of pounds are being invested in it, and a spanking new unit is shortly to be opened, within the budget and ahead of schedule. Scunthorpe district health authority is also responsible for the Boothferry area, and I was delighted when my hon. Friend the Minister was able to bring that capital building programme onstream. She wrote to me a few weeks ago to let me know of the success of that project. It looks as if the hospital will be built ahead of schedule.

That is evidence not of a Government who do not care about the National Health Service, but of a Government who are putting their money where their mouth is. In my constituency, which falls within those two health authorities, there is the brand-new hospital in Great Grimsby, the extension — involving many millions of pounds—of Scunthorpe general hospital and the brand new hospital at Goole.

Hon. Members may ask, "What about Glanford hospital? It is old fashioned, and it has been there for a long time." I visited that hospital a few weeks ago—again, because as a Member of Parliament I get to know people who need hospital care. The president of the Brigg and Cleethorpes Conservative women's advisory committee, who is now 90 years of age and has not been in the best of health during the past few months, was admitted in January to the Glanford hospital, which is a geriatric hospital. Outwardly, it appears to be a typical, old-fashioned cottage hospital, as we used to call them. Inside, however, a magnificent renovation programme has taken place, and the wards are bright, light and airy. Many of the geriatric patients are not in the best of health, being in their 80s and 90s, but the facilities in the hospital are remarkable.

That is a demonstration of what can be done, even to old hospitals. If it were ever suggested that that old-fashioned, 19th century hospital should be pulled down, there would be an outcry from the local people, who recognise the tremendous renovation work done by the Scunthorpe health authority, and the useful purpose that it serves as a local community hospital.

I have given no statistics; I have simply described the way that I perceive the district health authorities and their hospitals from the reactions of visiting friends who are receiving treatment, or from making formal visits to those hospitals. Nevertheless, statistics are important, and it is right that I should use this opportunity to tell the House how my constituency has come to possess those magnificent facilities.

In 1985, the National Health Service in England treated 4·5 million more patients than in 1978, Labour's last full year in office. Under the last Labour Government, the number of patients treated increased by only 1 million. The present Government have cut hospital waiting lists by 70,000, and waiting times for non-urgent cases are lower than at any time in the past 10 years. New initiatives have been announced for further reductions, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made a while ago, with the establishment of the special fund over the next two years. I understand that the first allocation of £25 million in 1987-88 will enable an extra 100,000 patients to be treated.

I can confirm from the experiences that I have described this evening that the Government have embarked on the biggest hospital building programme in the history of the Health Service. Some 200 schemes, each worth more than £1 million, have been started and completed under the present Government, while 440 schemes are in the pipeline. More than 100 of them will be completed in the next three years alone. Spending on the NHS has increased from £7·75 billion in 1978-79 to an expected £20·6 billion in 1987-88, an increase in real terms of 31 per cent. Total spending will reach £22 billion by 1989-90, and in 1987-88 health authorities will be able to use an additional £150 million in cash savings from cost improvement programmes and efficiency measures. There are 63,000 more nurses and midwives than in 1978, and 12,000 more doctors and dentists.

However, the test is not necessarily how much is spent —I have described the massive expenditure under the present Administration—but the position from the point of view of the consumer. The most important health care statistic relates not to the amount of money that is spent on the service, or even to the number of beds, but to the number of patients being treated. Since the present Government came into office, the combination of more resources and better value for money has resulted in clear improvements in the quality of care provided. It is a record of which my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State can be justly proud.

I understand that 38,000 hip operations were performed in 1984—10,000 more than in 1978. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has announced that the target for 1990 is 50,000. In 1984, 11,000 coronary artery by-pass operations were carried out—more than three times the number in 1978. The target for 1990 is at least 17,000. In 1984, there were 55,000 cataract operations—17,000 more than in 1978. By 1990, at least 70,000 cataract operations should be carried out. In 1984, 350 bone

[Mr. Michael Brown]

marrow transplants were performed, 320 more than in 1978. By 1990, there should be at least 550. Hon. Members should read tonight's article in *The London Evening Standard.* It refers to the tremendous advances that are being made in bone marrow transplants.

This Government have also done a considerable amount to harness the benefits of modern technology. New treatments have been pioneered. The first ever heart and lung transplant was performed in 1983. There were 51 heart and lung operations in 1985. In 1986, laser treatment was used for the first time to unblock a coronary artery, and laser treatment of a different kind has meant that certain eye conditions, which previously were untreated, can now be cured. New technology is leading to the earlier detection of illness and to the greater chance of total recovery.

Under the last Labour Government, waiting lists increased by nearly 250,000 to a record 750,000. By September 1981, waiting lists had been reduced by over one-sixth, to 619,000. The House should not forget that the union action in 1982, which was officially supported by the Labour party, hit patients. The Government estimate that in England alone waiting lists grew, as a result of that action, by 140,000, but since then the total number of people on waiting lists has again decreased. In September 1986, the number of places on the in-patient waiting list in England was 681,000—70,000 fewer than under Labour. A special fund, amounting to £50 million over the next two years, is being used to reduce excessive waiting lists and times. The health authorities have already shown that there is a commitment to tackling this problem. This fund will enable them to make further progress, including a reduction both in the time that it takes to see a consultant and in the time before one can have an operation.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State have constantly reminded us, and it bears repetition, that the National Health Service is the largest employer in western Europe. In England alone, it employs 1 million people. Manpower costs account for 70 per cent. of the total running costs of the hospital service, yet no system of manpower planning existed until this Government introduced one. The proper planning of manpower and the additional resources that the Government have made available have resulted in a considerable expansion of both medical and nursing staff, while the number of ancillaries has been substantially reduced.

There is no better way for a Member of Parliament to get to know the attitude of staff—what they think about the National Health Service and what their commitment to it is—than by having friends in the National Health Service. I see the Conservative Association's constituency chairman in my parliamentary constituency of Brigg and Cleethorpes on a regular basis — indeed, almost every week. When I go to her house I meet her daughter who works as a nurse in the Grimsby district hospital. She keeps me informed of what is happening in the hospital, from the point of view of the staff.

Of course she deserves to be paid more than she has been paid in the past. I spoke to her soon after the Government's announcement that they were to implement in full the independent pay review body's recommendations. She was grateful to the Government for recognising that nurses are an important group of professional people who are doing a very valuable job for the community. She does not intend to leave the NHS, and she drew my attention to an often quoted statistic — that many thousands of nurses are leaving the NHS every year.

Nurses, like the rest of us, grow older. At the age of 60, female nurses retire, and they show up in the statistics as leaving the NHS. I do not know whether this is unparliamentary, and if it is I shall withdraw the word, but we have to nail the lie that nurses are leaving the NHS because it is not rewarding them properly. The fact is that many nurses are leaving the NHS year by year because they are retiring, but others are coming into the profession.

We need to do everything possible to restore morale in the NHS. We must make nurses, whose training takes a long time, feel that they are being rewarded properly for their vocation. If the Government are able to do in the future what they have done in the past, the standard of morale in the NHS among ancillary workers and nurses will be one of which we can be proud.

I have in my hand a speech that was made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services to last year's Conservative party conference. There is much in it that deserves repetition. He set out the problem that the Government have to face: of the Labour party and the alliance not telling the people about what is happening in practice in the NHS. He said:

> "The fact is that more resources are being devoted to health than at any stage in the history of the health service —£11 billion a year more than when we came to office. The fact is that more doctors and nurses are working for patients than at any stage in the history of the health service . . . Above all, the fact is that we are providing more and better patient care than at any stage in the history of the health service—4½ million more patient cases being treated today than when this Government came to office."

My right hon. Friend then said:

> "against that background it is grotesque to claim that the health service in this country is in decline. It is selling the health service short. It is selling short the success of health service staff. It is selling short the achievement of this Government."

And it is selling short the achievements of my right hon. and hon. Friends who serve so well as Ministers in the Department of Social Security.

When the Opposition parties hear that in England last year we treated 1 million more in-patient cases than in 1978, they dismiss it as statistics. When they hear that we treated more than 400,000 additional day cases last year, they dismiss it as statistics. When they hear that we have provided for over three and a quarter million additional day patient attendances, they dismiss it as statistics. They forget that each of those 4½ million statistics is a personal story of care: of dedicated staff working night and day, of patients such as my agent having been relieved of pain and having been given renewed hope.

We bandy about statistics. I see statistics in terms of the experiences of my agent, my next door neighbour, my president of the women's advisory committee of the Conservative party in Brigg and Cleethorpes — three people I know whom I visited when they were in hospital. Those three people appear as statistics on sheets of paper. In hospital I saw them being given patient care by dedicated staff. They are the real figures of health care in this country. They show that health care has developed and, above all, they show that today the NHS, under this Government, is bringing more help to more people than ever before.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State has been carrying out her duties for some time. She is as familiar a figure in this House as a Government Minister as she is in the country. I hope and pray, on behalf of all those who need health care in this country, that my hon. Friend will be re-elected with a massive majority as the Member of Parliament for Derbyshire, South. The NHS needs her, just as it needs her colleagues in the DHSS. I hope that the next three or four weeks will pass quickly so that once again the NHS and those who use it will be able to have confidence in the fact that she will be responding to Adjournment debates in the excellent way in which she is responding to them today.

6.29 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): My hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) has shown us once again why he is regarded as a most conscientious and active champion of his constituents. Although he is absolutely right in saying that there has been a general increase in Health Service expenditure, I am in no doubt that the remarkable progress that has been made in his constituency and the surrounding area is, at least in part, a direct consequence of his advocacy of the needs of his constituency, which has achieved so much in such a short time. I congratulate him on the superb work that he has done for his constituents over the years.

The issue that I intend to raise may seem minor, but I assure my hon. Friend the Minister that it is a big issue in my part of the world. My hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes rightly pointed out that there had been a substantial increase in Health Service expenditure. Although that is undoubtedly true, some problems remain. Despite the extra resources given to the Southend health authority, we have serious problems in recruiting nurses because of the high cost of living in our area. Will the Government therefore examine seriously the problems and difficulties of the recruitment of public servants in areas where costs are high and to which it is difficult to encourage people to come?

My hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes referred to the forthcoming election. In Southend, which I represent and where I live, many people will be thinking just as much about the future of Southend's radiotherapy unit as about the exchanges that will take place between politicians. We should not underestimate the concern felt in Southend about the recommendation by the regional health authority that the radiotherapy unit should be closed and an entirely new one built at Harold Wood about 35 miles away. I emphasise that this is not a party political point; all the parties in Southend and councillors who represent a wide spread of opinion have united in a campaign to persuade the health authority to change its mind and, if that is impossible, to persuade the Government to overturn what they regard as a cruel and costly recommendation.

I understand from a parliamentary answer that my hon. Friend the Minister gave yesterday that she has received about 1,700 individual letters on this subject. They represent not a concerted campaign of letter-writing but an expression of genuine concern from the people of the community. In addition, my hon. Friend the Minister will be aware that a massive petition sponsored by Southend's *Evening Echo* was delivered to the Secretary of State on Monday by my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon).

Although extra spending is valuable, it can sometimes be misused. The regional health authority's recommendation is not a means of saving money or reallocating resources so that savings can be made. On the authority's own admission, the new proposal will cost an extra £4·5 million. Sometimes expenditure in itself does not solve problems; indeed, it can create new ones. It is proposed that a perfectly good, modern and popular unit with high standards should be closed and an entirely new one built to replace both it and others. The expert report submitted to the regional health authority appeared to recommend the retention of the Southend unit. In particular, the report stated that the authority's members might take the view that the Southend unit would provide a cheaper and more certain option. According to the report, Southend would be guaranteed 1,600 new patients per year, while the Harold Wood hospital would have no such guarantee, and might lose patients from Southend and district to London. The report made it abundantly clear that the closure would cost more money.

My hon. Friend the Minister is aware that the proposals are going through a long period of consultation. If, following that, our community health council puts forward objections, the region will have to reconsider its position. If it declines to do so, the matter will go to the Minister, and the Minister must decide.

The move would cause enormous hardship to many people undergoing radiotherapy, including a close relative of mine, who lives in Southend. Such patients are often not well enough to travel long distances. Sometimes the treatment can cause sickness, which would make a long journey unpleasant.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will reflect on and answer two specific questions. First, is the Secretary of State absolutely convinced that the policy of centralising radiotherapy departments is in the public interest and in the interests of consumers? The policy decision was taken by the Government a long time ago. They thought that it would be better for the public if the various radiotherapy departments could be concentrated into larger units with 2,000 plus patients per annum.

The only advantage put forward for centralisation is that a larger concentration of medical expertise — perhaps a larger number of consultants — will be available. I suggest that any possible advantage stemming from that will be offset by the enormous hardship that will be suffered by patients having to travel long distances. If it was suggested that such patients should become in-patients, the extra costs would be substantial. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will consider whether this is a sensible policy or whether it should be reviewed. She will find that in every case, when centralisation has been proposed, it has caused anguish and concern.

Secondly, bearing in mind the strength of feeling in Southend and the fact that local people believe that they have an overwhelming case — happily, all the parties have worked together; no one has sought to take political advantage of it — will my hon. Friend assure us that if the matter is put on the desk of the Secretary of State one of the Department's Ministers will visit the Southend unit before making a decision? I know that Ministers are very busy people. They have to make important decisions and deal with a flood of correspondence and are sometimes called to the House to answer Adjournment debates which seem to go on for ever. However, I think that my hon. Friend will agree that, given the magnitude of this issue,

[Mr. Teddy Taylor]

it is desperately important that the local community should know that the Minister has not just read a report or seen the figures but has seen the unit and spoken to those involved.

In the dying moments of this Parliament, I appreciate an opportunity to put to the Minister a matter which I believe is causing more concern in my area than many of the political points which will be exchanged during the campaign. This matter is not related to Southend alone. In his usual conscientious way, my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) is attending the debate to make it clear that he is interested in the subject and that his constituents, as well as mine, are concerned about the matter—as are those of my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark) and of my right hon. Friends the Members for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) and Southend, West (Mr. Channon), who has been so conscientious in advocating his constituents' interests in this regard. It would be beneficial if during the election campaign—as I have said, this will not be a political issue; all the parties will be expressing the same view—my hon. Friend the Minister could give an assurance that she will contemplate a review of the general policy of concentrating radiotherapy units and a clear assurance that before any decision is made a Minister from her Department will visit the unit and speak to patients, consultants and all those involved.

6.39 pm

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I am extremely grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) for raising this Adjournment debate and for allowing us to have one last opportunity of bringing home to the British people that over the past eight years the Conservative Government under my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister care deeply for the health and welfare of the British people. No better example could we have of the caring Member of Parliament than my hon. Friend, who came to the House with a small majority but who will show how a small majority can become a large one at this general election when his constituents will show their appreciation for his great care. We are all grateful for this opportunity of placing the success of our policies before the country.

Whatever may be the case in other areas, Burton has no cause to complain about the Government's contribution to the health, welfare and caring for the people. The resources that have been channeled into our hospitals and primary care facilities have been enormous and have resulted in substantial improvements in health care. I am grateful, not only to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State from the neighbouring constituency of Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) for working so hard in the short time that she has been at the Department, but to the chairman of the South-East Staffordshire health authority, Mrs. Margaret Stanhope, the manager of the Burton hospitals, Mr. Tony Hill, the doctors, nurses, ancillary workers and appreciative patients.

As a result of the increased resources that have been made available in my area — the debate is about increased, not decreased, resources — in Burton many more patients are treated than ever before, many more staff are employed in direct patient care and there have been major hospital building improvements. The health authority spend has risen from £13 million in 1978 to £30·5 million, which in real terms is an increase of about 16 per cent. and is still rising. That is a tremendous and praiseworthy achievement.

In 1978, 84,000 out-patients were treated, whereas in 1985 108,176 were treated in Burton's hospitals. The number of in-patient treatments has increased substantially from 16,500 to 23,000 over the same period. Naturally there are those who look, only superficially, and who seek to criticise where no genuine criticism is merited, saying, "But the waiting list has increased in Burton." It has indeed increased substantially, although the number of patients having to wait over a year for admission has decreased from a peak of 831 to 325, which is itself a small reduction on the number of people having to wait so long before the Conservative Government took power. But the reason why the waiting list has increased in Burton is that the standard of health care is so high that it has attracted cases from miles around, so that must be taken into account when we consider the length of the waiting list.

I do not intend to hold up proceedings a moment longer than necessary, but it is important to get the message across. We in the Conservative party are not all that good at doing that. We do not shout from the rooftops whenever we have these great successes, so I am taking this opportunity of doing so now.

In 1979, 1,137 nurses' and midwives' full-time equivalents were in post. The figure rose to 1,527 in 1986 — an increase of 34 per cent. Therefore, more nurses and midwives are providing primary health care of the highest standard. The number of medical and dental staff also increased. The number of all staff rose from 2,379 in 1979 to 2,833 in 1986—an increase of 19 per cent. All those people are providing care of the most efficient and effective type for patients.

There is also a remarkable tale to tell about major improvements in buildings. In Burton we have a new clinic in Cross street, costing nearly £500,000 which I was privileged to open; a new clinic in Horninglow, costing £250,000, which I have been invited to open should the electors of Burton be sufficiently appreciative of the Conservative Government for their health provision to reflect that gratitude in support for me; a new clinic about to be built in Stretton which will cost £368,000; a new mental handicap unit which has cost £500,000; a new nurses' education centre about to be completed which has cost £1 million and will train new nurses — a vitally necessary ingredient in future health care; and a new small hospital about to be built in Uttoxeter, with 24 beds for the elderly and a new clinic. The authority has provided finance of £23,000 for the family practitioner committee to engage three doctors to spread its cervical cytology unit. A portable body scanner, costing about £50,000 to use, and a special care baby unit have also been provided.

Most impressive of all, we are about to have phase 2 of the Burton district hospital centre, which will cost £23 million. That will be a fantastic achievement after many years of waiting. We waited through Labour Governments who did nothing, but now the Conservative Government have provided the money and have been able to do so because their economic policies have been so successful.

The regional health authority was slightly over-optimistic about the date at which the building could start. It advanced the programme by about nine months in the expectation that 15 per cent. of the resources would be over-committed because slippage in construction work had been a feature of previous programmes. But the Conservative Government have been so successful that the pace of building has picked up, major developments are ahead of target, and all the money has been used. Therefore, what was hoped to be a nine-month advance has been put back to the original planned date, and that is disappointing.

I am not sure what the Government can do about that, but perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister would say a little more about the "unconventional" financing which, providing it does not run across public expenditure controls, the DHSS is prepared to consider in some circumstances. It may be possible for the health authority to raise some extra finance on the private market which may enable the hospital to be built even faster than planned. That expenditure will mean an additional 380 beds, including a maternity and special care baby facility. It will include five theatre suites, an expanded X-ray department, a new pathology department, dining facilities, children's and antenatal clinic facilities, and expanded rehabilitation and day surgery departments. Health education too requires a large amount of space devoted to classrooms, discussion rooms, demonstration rooms, common rooms, first aid rooms, libraries, offices and all sorts of facilities that are necessary for the strengthening of the teaching of nurses and doctors in patient care.

I could go on and on because I could say something about the savings that have been made. I am told by the Burton hospital management that the privatisation of the cleaning and other services has resulted in huge savings of one third of a million pounds. The new kitchen is likely to save more than £100,000 a year. The laundry is now being looked into to see whether, in conjunction with the Mid-Staffordshire health authority, competitive tendering can produce substantial annual savings of over £100,000 which again will go into direct patient care.

It is a source of great pride to me that, when I go around the Burton hospital and talk to the doctors, nurses and, most important, to the patients, I hear how proud they are to be not only the servants of but the customers of the Health Service that the Burton health unit provides. It is because I feel so proud about it that I will be going into the election that much more confident than I would otherwise be. I believe that the people in my consituency will show their appreciation of the large amount of care that the Conservative Government have lavished upon those in this quite small midlands town which has always dedicated itself to the production of wealth, through engineering and, above all, beer.

The good health of the Burton people, which I hope will continue, to a substantial extent is encouraged by a moderate consumption of the great product of the town of Burton-upon-Trent, which is renowned not only in Britain but throughout the world.

6.52 pm

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) on securing the Adjournment debate and allowing us to place on record the Government's achievements in health care. I regret that recently the Labour health spokesman visited my constituency and quite deliberately aroused alarm and despondency among my constituents about health care in our area. My hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) will recall a meeting that she had with me a few weeks ago when she had the pleasure of meeting the leaders of our local health authority. I think that she was quite delighted to see the achievements of those people in the Basildon area. There is no doubt that our health services are second to none. Our hospital waiting list is down. The whole breadth and style of health operations carried out during the past eight years has been unsurpassed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South might feel that she is being bullied on the matter, but I know that the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) will agree that the suggested reorganisation of the cancer services in our area is quite extraordinary. It is without sense, without reason and above all will not help those who are suffering from this terrible problem.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) mentioned the magnificant support that we have had in our area from the *Evening Echo*. I think that it was last week that it arranged for a delegation to meet my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services and present him with a petition. I understand that my right hon. Friend looked very sympathetically at our case. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will recall her words at the meeting, when she said that she would look most carefully at the whole question of travel and how that affects those patients who are being treated with radiotherapy.

I also place on record how proud I feel to represent a constituency where the voluntary sector contributed £500,000 to build St. Luke's hospice. It is a magnificant achievement and an example of the wonderful community spirit that we have developed in my constituency.

6.56 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I welcome the opportunity to debate the subject that has been raised by the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown). I have been most interested to hear the words of my other hon. Friends. By way of aside, may I say that my hon. Friends tonight have demonstrated the sense of the first past the post electoral system. Each of them is an immensely strong and supportive local member closely associated with his constituency. Were we to go to any sort of system such as proportional representation, the specific, caring and direct link that each of them has demonstrated tonight would simply vanish. For example, in Derbyshire, where we have 10 Members serving 10 quite different constituencies, we would have to make some effort to look after everybody and thereby, I suspect, nobody would be looked after terribly well. It is in the interests of the British people that we should have a Member for Southend, East, a Member for Southend, West, a Member for Basildon and so on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I hope that the hon. Lady will, first, not turn her back on the Chair; and, secondly, will address the subject of the debate, which is not proportional representation, but expansion of the health services.

Mrs. Currie: My apologies, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My hon. Friends are all sitting behind me and I shall end up cross-eyed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes made a magnificent speech. I only wish that I could speak as well as that. He was quite right in the points that he

[Mrs. Currie]

raised on the funding of the National Health Service, the staffing of the National Health Service and on the results in terms of patient care. I have checked his points, and he got them all right. Therefore, I shall not go through them again except to draw attention to the results in terms of the care of patients. I shall then indicate some areas where the Government are achieving firsts in patterns of patient care and in ways of running the Health Service.

My hon. Friend was quite right when he said that we are looking after 1 million more in-patient cases every year. We now have 6 million in-patients a year. He was quite right when he said that we are looking after more day cases. Within the next Parliament, I suspect that there will be a substantial increase in the number of day case treatments. We are now looking after about 37,500,000 out-patient visits every year. They are not all individual patients, because some come more than once, but that number has risen by 3 million since the Government took office in 1979. That is an astonishing increase. That is an improvement in productivity of which any business in the country would be proud.

We have also taken up the challenge that medicine offers. When I was young, people used to die of polio, but that disease has disappeared. When my father was young, people used to die from tuberculosis and, indeed, he nearly did. Our generation faces many and varied challenges. Some of those challenges are offered by improvements in medical sciences. For example, we find that the number of patients who received transplants last year was an all-time record. That included kidney transplants, which have now become routine. The number of patients receiving kidney treatment has doubled and we look forward to seeing more such treatments in future. During the lifetime of this Government there has been a threefold increase in heart bypass operations, and they have brought life once more to patients who would previously have been crippled by heart disease.

About 16 million more prescriptions are now dispensed, and that means that about 300 million items a year are now dispensed under the National Health Service. We have also provided about 5 million additional courses of dental treatment. I know that that will be of special interest to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence), who has views on dental treatment. He knows that the figures for dental disease in his constituency are among the worst in the country. It is immensely useful that such a service is available and that people are making use of it.

Mr. Lawrence: As my hon. Friend tempts me, I cannot forbear from asking whether it is not right that in some of the regions in which there has been the sharpest decrease in dental caries in children's teeth there is no flouride in the water?

Mrs. Currie: Yes. I think that my hon. and learned Friend said that to the tune of about four hours and 35 minutes early one morning in a debate at which I was present. I do not tempt him to say it all over again.

We also find that patients are taking up other aspects of our care. About 2·5 million more sight tests are being performed on patients than there were in 1979. That is about 10 million sight tests a year, and it is immensely to the good to know that people are taking up that aspect of health care, which is free.

Perinatal death rates have dropped, and that is a tribute to everybody concerned with the service for mothers and babies. In 1978-79 the death rate for babies, either at birth or within the first week, was about 15 per 1,000 live births. The death rate was very high among some groups in our society, especially among the poorest mothers. The overall death rate has now dropped to fewer than 10 per 1,000, and it means also that about 3,000 more babies are alive year by year than in the 1970s. Most of them can expect to live and grow in a perfectly normal way. That means that about half of all those babies that are born weighing less than a kilogramme—less than the weight of a bag of sugar—can expect to survive and to lead a normal life. That is a remarkable record. What pleases me most is that the death rates for babies from the poorest social classes have improved apace with those elsewhere. The death rate in the lowest social class, social class V, is now only 12 per 1,000. Therefore, it is better than the average death rate of only five or six years ago.

One area of work that nobody ever mentions, but in which I take an interest, is the number of patients in mental handicap hospitals and units who are now able to take advantage of living in the community. Many of the constituents of my hon. Friends and myself are able to do that. Under this Government the number of such people in hospital has fallen by 22 per cent. Most of all, mentally handicapped children who do not require to be in hospital are no longer put there, and the number of mentally handicapped children growing up in hospital has dropped by 73 per cent.

That is a great achievement, but it is more than that, because it shows that this Government have taken on board in the Health Service a determination to break new ground.

This is the first Government who have seriously addressed themselves to prevention and good health. I am delighted that the impassioned pleas of my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes that we should have the freedom to smoke does not extend to encouraging his constituents to take up the evil weed. We hope to see prevention and health promotion making rapid progress in years to come. We have set up the new Health Education Authority and have taken on board some of the criticisms that were made about the functioning of the old Health Education Council, which the authority replaces. I hope that the messages will get across far more in future, especially to those who have perhaps not always taken them seriously.

The Government are the first to have taken women's health seriously, and this is the first Parliament in which there has been a Minister with responsibility for women's health. I am delighted to say that. I would not mind who was doing that, but I feel proud and honoured that I have been given that opportunity. The Government are the first in the world to develop a comprehensive nationwide breast cancer screening programme for women. That will tackle the biggest killer of women in early life and will be of immense help. We expect to save many thousands of lives, although, of course, it will be some time before the figures start to show.

It also means that we have under way a major programme for cervical cancer. By this time next year every health district in Britain—nearly 200 of them—will have a fully computerised call and recall system by which women at risk, and that means women between the ages of 20 and 64, will be invited to have a smear test and can be shown to be in the clear from this particularly nasty little cancer. We feel that we can save lives in that way.

The Government are the first to take nurses' pay seriously and to set up a review body for nurses' pay. We recognise that nurses who do not strike have a major contribution to make to the Health Service, not just in terms of their skills and their numbers, but in terms of their approach and their professionalism towards their patients. When we take the latest award into account, we see that nurses' pay has risen by 30 per cent. in real terms. The last Labour Government saw a decrease of 21 per cent. in real terms in nurses' pay.

Exactly 10 years ago, in 1976-77, the Labour Government gave the nurses a miserable 5 per cent. cash uplift. That meant that in real terms the purchasing power of nurses' pay dropped by 10 per cent. in one year. We have done exactly the opposite. As I say, real pay has risen by 30 per cent. and we have deliberately slanted the rise towards the most experienced nurses, who we want to keep in nursing. Given the latest pay award, in real terms a sister's pay has risen by 40 per cent. under this Government. That is also a first. My hon. Friends have drawn attention to the fact that we are the first Government to take seriously management in the Health Service.

Mr. Lawrence: Before my hon. Friend talks about management, may I ask her whether she agrees that it is a matter of considerable importance that we have reduced a nurse's working week from 40 to 37½ hours? Is that not a substantial improvement, even on the wage increases?

Mrs. Currie: As usual, my hon. and learned Friend is right. As soon as we came to power in 1979 the nurses asked whether the working week could be reduced from 40 to 37½ hours. We did that and provided additional staff to make up the numbers. We have provided even more staff since to ensure that the Health Service can go on expanding in the way that we want it to expand. I thank my hon. and learned Friend for providing the opportunity for me to draw that to the attention of the House.

Mr. Michael Brown: Will my hon. Friend confirm that that statistic is the equivalent in real terms of increasing nurses' pay by about 5 or 6 per cent.? That action alone corresponds to that sort of increase in their real take home pay.

Mrs. Currie: My hon. Friend is right insofar as a nurse continues to work 40 hours and will be paid overtime. That tends to happen, especially in London. It means a substantial improvement in nurses' terms of service and recognises that they are professionals and skilled people. In that context, it is worth remembering that we have made vigorous efforts to improve the lot of junior hospital doctors and have banned the most onerous rotas, which required doctors to work very long hours. We are determined to make further progress on that as the opportunity arises. I take a strong view about doctors having to work very long hours.

The Government are the first to take seriously the problem of managing the Health Service. When I speak to business men's groups or business women's groups I am always able to say, "However big your business, mine is bigger because the National Health Service is the largest business in this country." We are the largest employer in western Europe. The only thing to compete with us is the Russian army, which is not a volunteer army in the way that the staff of the National Health Service are. I can say to them, "However big the customer body you may deal with, ours is bigger."

We deal with the whole nation and with 6 million in-patients every year, as well as the other matters for which I have given figures. Therefore, management matters. We could not run the Health Service without good managers and staff. The Griffiths revolution—that is exactly what it is — means that the Health Service benefits from management expertise of a kind that matches that of our best businesses. We are beginning to see the results of that, and more of that is to come.

One example is putting the hotel services of the Health Service—catering, laundry and domestic work—out to tender. That is now saving the Health Service some £93 million a year, which goes straight back into health care. We are on target to reach £100 million a year very shortly. The National Audit Office, which looks at the figures carefully, tells us that we are likely to save £120 million.

Opposition Members—only one is here, but we are glad to see him as it means that we are not talking to ourselves—would do away with contracting out cleaning and catering services to competitive tender. They would have to find that £120 million from somewhere else, or they would not expand the Health Service, because that money would not be available.

Mr. Lawrence: That is what happened last time.

Mrs. Currie: That is exactly what happened last time.

The Government are the first to have taken primary care seriously. When we talk about the Health Service, an image of a hospital comes into our mind, but most people are cared for at home. Half a million people go to their general practitioners every working day. Through our expansion of that service we have more GPs with shorter lists to enable them to spend longer on each consultation talking to patients.

Last summer we issued a consultation document on primary care, which was the first time primary care had been looked at properly. The consultation period finished early this year and we are considering how to take that forward. We expect that it will result in legislation in the new Parliament. I am glad to see the attention that has been given to that work.

The Government will go to the country on their record, which in the Health Service is a matter of considerable pride and achievement. We have record funding, record staffing, record patient care and record satisfaction with the Health Service. Independent surveys show that approximately 88 per cent. of those who have been treated in the Health Service are satisfied, or very satisfied, with their care. We have 6 million satisfied in-patient customers in the Health Service.

Mr. Michael Brown: My hon. Friend is aware that hon. Members receive letters of complaint about matters such as unemployment benefit and the tax office, but how many receive letters such as I have received which they pass on to Ministers, saying, "Dear Mr. Brown, I have just received treatment in the Grimsby district health centre and I was appalled at this, that or the other"? If I have received such a letter, it would have been only once or twice in the past eight years.

Mrs. Currie: My hon. Friend makes a serious point. We have 6 million satisfied customers who come out of hospitals and surgeries saying "Thank God", and quite right too. I wish, as he does, that occasionally they would say thanks also to the staff concerned. It has become fashionable to knock the Health Service. I would wish to see it become fashionable to praise the magnificent work done by the staff of the Health Service. I say that quite deliberately, because it is easy to provide the money, but difficult to translate that money into the top quality patient care that gives a Health Service that is the envy of the world. It would be wonderful if everyone could recognise that and recognise the excellent professional work that goes into making that so.

My hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) reminded me of the excellent meeting that I had with the chairman, general manager and others from his local health authority. They had asked for help as a result of what appeared to be a financial crisis at the end of last year. We demurred a little and encouraged them to look at their figures again. We suggested that the regional health authority might discuss some of their difficulties with them.

As a former district health authority chairman, I am reluctant to tell district health authorities how to run their services. By the time we got the meeting organised, they had sorted it out. The result was a magnificient litany of how problems had been faced and tackled with vigour and force, so the Basildon health service has improved and will continue to improve as a result of the learning process those people went through. I congratulate—I am sure my hon. Friend will join me—all concerned; I am sure that they serve his constituents with great distinction.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) and my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon mentioned the Southend radiotherapy unit. In the past year we have heard about the strength of feeling over the Southend radiotherapy unit. Were there any doubt in the mind of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about the strength of feeling, that was dispelled the other night when my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) went to him with a petition with over 100,000 names on it. My hon. Friend asked me some direct questions; for example, is the centralisation of radiotherapy still policy? My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is taking a close interest in that. Such policies are always kept under constant review. My hon. Friend is quite right to demand that we look at the policy, which was drawn up in the days when equipment was rather different and it was necessary to serve a large catchment area with large and expensive equipment. I assure him that the Secretary of State will note his remarks and take them on board.

My hon. Friend asked about a visit. I thank him, on behalf of my colleagues, for the invitation. The thought of spending a day in Southend later this summer rather appeals. I know not whether the invitation will be accepted by me or another incumbent of this post, but I will ensure that the officials know about the invitation so that it can be passed on. I am sure that at least one of the officials would be delighted to accompany whoever goes to meet the very pleasant people of Southend and that they would have an interesting day finding out what is going on down there.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton lives in my constituency and has a habit of saying that I am his Member, which occasionally produces some ribald comments, as one can imagine. He drew attention to one of the main products—not the sole one—of Burton-upon-Trent's strength, which is the beer. I have a confession to make. The beer is the reason for my being the Member for Derbyshire, South. When my husband and I were attending various interviews around the country some four years ago, we found ourselves sitting in south Derbyshire supping a little of the local brew. My husband is a Yorkshireman and something of a connoisseur of beer. He smacked his lips, looked at me, and said, "You are going to get this one, aren't you?". I tried that much harder, and I am delighted that the good people of south Derbyshire decided that I was what they were looking for, at least on that occasion. I hope that on 11 June they will again decide that I am what they want.

The hospitals at Burton-upon-Trent look after my constituents, and the staff are numbered among my constituents. I share my hon. and learned Friend's admiration for the quality of work in a place which has never claimed to be one of the great cities of our nation and which perhaps in the past lagged behind places such as Birmingham and Sheffield, which have taken the lead in health care.

Burton is showing us how to do it. It has a special quality and I am grateful for the opportunity of putting that on the record. Burton has the most friendly and good natured people in the Health Service. They create a caring atmosphere that is second to none. They deal with their patients with a sweet countenance and I am certain that that helps people to recover more quickly. They seek help, with confidence, earlier so that they can be properly treated. Patients are treated with great skill. I was at dinner the other night with Mr. Glick, a senior consultant. He told me that he now deals with about 40 per cent. of his work on a day basis, and so leads the country. He is showing other parts of the country, including areas that we discussed earlier, how it can be done.

We shall encourage the health authority to take note of what has been said about the new Burton hospital development. I take the point made by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton about creative financing. The difficulty is that by whatever means it is done, and by whatever name it is called, it means an increase in the public sector borrowing requirement, which must be avoided. I am grateful for the opportunity to put on the record my thanks for the way in which my constituents are cared for. The Prime Minister has said that the National Health Service is safe in our hands. I know that my constituents are safe in the hands of the Burton hospitals and their staff.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes will not mind that he has had to wait until last for a reply. His constituency is covered by the Grimsby district health authority and by the Scunthorpe district health authority. I am glad to say that a careful examination of statistics shows that health is safe with us in that neighbourhood. The picture there is remarkable.

Between 1982 and 1985 the number of front-line staff—doctors, nurses and others who deal directly with patients—in the Grimsby district health authority area increased from 1,461 to 1,665. That is a substantial increase. Finance increased from about £20 million in 1982-83 to £31·6 million this year. That is the cash allocation that we have made to the health authority. We could add to that savings, growth and development and sales. The authority is, therefore, likely to spend even more than the £31·6 million. In addition, it has received £10 million in capital money over the past five years. My hon. Friend described precisely what it has done with that money. We are pleased at the progress.

More important than input is patient care. In Grimsby between 1982 and 1985 the number of in-patient cases increased from just under 20,000 to nearly 24,000. Day cases increased from 3,300 to 4,800. The number of out-patient attendances also rose substantially. They are statistics, numbers on a page, but they refer to real Grimsby people, who will be real voters on 11 June, when we hope that my hon. Friend's majority will be increased in the same way.

It is particularly pleasing that the main improvements have been across the board. In general medicine there has been a 55 per cent. increase in in-patient cases since 1982. In general surgery there has been a 27 per cent. increase and a 62 per cent. increase in the number of ear, nose and throat cases treated as in-patients.

It is not surprising that between 31 March 1983 and 30 September 1986 the in-patient waiting list in Grimsby dropped from 2,500 to 1,300. That figure is still too high, but it is pleasing that no urgent cases are now on the list for more than a month, and so urgent cases are being seen much faster. The number of non-urgent cases waiting has also dropped substantially, and the number waiting for more than a year dropped between 1983 and 1986 from 850 to just over 100. That is still too high, and I shall not be satisfied until the figure is nil, but that shows the improvement in the neighbourhood and it is a tribute to the hard work of the staff.

The same picture is to be found in the Scunthorpe district health authority area. It cannot be entirely a coincidence. Such figures apply all over the country. In Scunthorpe the number of front-line staff rose from 1,287 in 1982 to 1,401 in 1985. More staff are now available to look after patients. Spending rose from just a shade under £20 million in 1982-83 to £27·6 million this year. That is a substantial increase. Added to that are savings and land sales.

In-patient activity also increased from 20,000 in-patient cases a year in the early 1980s to the current 25,000. Day cases have also increased, as have out-patient attendances. I am pleased that in the Scunthorpe district no urgent cases —none at all—have to wait for more than a month. It seems that there are no urgent cases on the waiting list. The staff simply deal with them. That has been so since 1985. It is a considerable improvement. Similarly, the number of non-urgent cases has dropped sharply from over 5,000 to 2,900. The number on the list for more than a year has also diminished to 801. That is still not good enough. Perhaps that health authority will take the opportunity to look at what it is doing and ensure that people do not have to wait any longer in Scunthorpe than they do in Grimsby.

It is pleasing to note that in Scunthorpe the waiting list for trauma and orthopaedic patients has decreased. A total of 739 people were waiting for non-urgent trauma and orthopaedic treatment, such as hip operations, but that number has dropped to about 400. That has improved the lives of hundreds of people who are now mobile as a result of hip operations.

This has been an extremely useful debate. We have been talking about health for about two hours. I note with interest the empty Opposition Benches. Not a single Opposition Front-Bench spokesman has bothered to turn up. Despite all the trumpeting about health care and what the Labour party intends to do, the Labour spokesmen on health are elsewhere. The House of Commons is still the most important place in the country to discuss health. The voting that allows us to spend all the extra money on the Health Service — to improve nurses' pay, to allocate more staff and to put up all those lovely new buildings —is done in this Chamber. Where are the Opposition?

What about the alliance Members? They are probably allied right now, because all of them are not here. We wonder how seriously they care about the basic work of running a good, modern Health Service and to improving health services for all.

There is one Labour Member here, the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), who intends to raise an Adjournment debate in his own right. I look forward to answering that debate. I believe that the Health Service is not only safe with the Conservatives, but that under no other Government could the record that has been described be achieved.

London Ambulance Service

7.29 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): The tradition and practice of the House has been to express grievances on the Adjournment. The Minister's closing remarks in the previous Adjournment debate do not accord with the traditions of this place. The Minister knows very well that when private Members raise Adjournment debates, whether it is the first, second or, as in this case, the third Adjournment, it is not the custom for Opposition Front Bench spokesmen to be present, nor is it the custom for other hon. Members, other than by arrangement, to be present to express their views. We have had not a formal debate on health, but a debate on the Adjournment in which individual hon. Members have excercised their right to raise particular items. It so happens that three of those items have been about health.

My Adjournment debate relates to the out-patients ambulance service in London, or, perhaps more accurately, the non-emergency ambulance service in London. I hope to be typically robust because this Adjournment before grievance is not just for this week or this day, but is, in effect, the Adjournment before grievance for this Parliament.

In the Minister's closing remarks in the previous debate she made the claim, often repeated, about the Health Service being safe in the hands of the Government. However, my speech will show that the Health Service is clearly not safe in their hands. It is true that the Minister and her hon. Friends reeled off a host of statistics in the last few minutes of the previous debate. They have used the usual public relations trick of semi-truths. In the same way, the Minister referred to the empty Benches on the Labour side and implied that we are not concerned about health. That is not the case, but such was the implication. Semi-truth is of course only a next door neighbour to an economy of the truth.

I will seek to prove—I challenge the Minister to deny it—that my thesis and that of my hon. Friends about the Health Service is correct. Indeed the Minister has already accepted that. A written answer on 5 March 1987, column *679*, showed that there had been a 41 per cent. reduction in the number of non-emergency cases carried by the London ambulance services between 1984-86. That is a shocking figure. The fact is that the administrative edict that brought about that savage reduction was not originally from Alexander Fleming house or from Health Ministers or the Department of Health and Social Security. It came from a Rayner-style edict from No. 10. That is a remarkable example of the elected dictatorship that is now on offer before the electorate.

In an Adjournment debate on 31 October 1986 I showed how that reduction had come about. Since then I have received further figures and further answers from the Minister. I wish to draw the attention of the House to those answers to make this issue a major matter of grievance. On the occasion of that Adjournment debate the Minister — I am glad to see that she is present because she has to answer for these matters—admitted that some 10,500 fewer walking patients were being transported—a reduction of 44 per cent. The Minister said:

> "I am more than happy at that development."—[*Official Report*, 31 October 1986; Vol. 103, c. 666.]

What greater expression of ministerial responsibility and approval can there be?

On that occasion, by way of assurance, the Minister told us that the acute ambulance service, the vehicles that run through the streets with sirens sounding and lights flashing, were being protected. The Minister had said in an earlier debate that if someone suffered a heart attack at Waterloo they would be taken right to Barts. However, if one of my constituents has a heart attack in Newham, what chance is there that Newham hospital's accident department — opened less than two years ago by the Queen — will be open? That accident department has been closed twice since Christmas, once for 40 hours and once for 60 hours. Even if one is transported in an acute ambulance, one is not necessarily transported to the emergency department of a new hospital, manned and ready for action.

There are some 350 acute ambulances in London and they travel some 3·5 million miles a year. There are 230 tail-lift non-emergency ambulances and some 400 so-called "coach" ambulances. They travel 7·5 million miles a year — twice as much as the acute ambulances. However, it was those non-emergency ambulances that were cut by 41 per cent. I am sure that the public are not aware of that reduction because the administration of the London ambulance service is arcane almost to the point of imbecility. It is run by the London ambulance services, quartered at Waterloo, and it used to be part of the Greater London council services for London. The ambulance service was transferred to the management of the South-West Thames regional health authority, which manages it on behalf of the four regional health authorities of London that meet in the centre of the city.

The London ambulance service has, quite sensibly, four district organisations that relate to the district health authorities. Therefore, the chain of accountability to the House is complex almost to the point that the service is not easily accountable other than in a debate of this nature.

As I explained in the previous Adjournment debate, several years ago, a gentleman from the East Birmingham health authority, Mr. Payne, was asked to make a survey on how non-emergency ambulance services could be provided more efficiently. One person, one study, but consider the results. In the course of that study Mr. Payne said that there was some misuse of the non-emergency ambulance service. I am prepared to believe that. However, when a non-emergency ambulance takes somebody to a hospital or a day centre that action must be certified by a medical person. As a taxpayer I am happy to give that medical person a little bit of leeway. Mr. Payne estimated that there was a 4 to 10 per cent. misuse of the service. He suggested that a possible saving of £9·4 million could be made. In London — the Minister is aware of this because she answered one of my questions on the matter — there is no evidence of such misuse, but the cuts went ahead.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): Not now there isn't.

Mr. Spearing: The Minister may say that, but I asked a question about previous misuse. If I am wrong, no doubt the Minister will correct me when she replies.

Mr. Payne — I do not wish to single him out unreasonably as the civil servant responsible, but his name was given on the document—presented his paper to the Minister. The Minister agreed that the way to reduce the cost was to make each district health authority in some way accountable for the ambulance service it received. Monetarism or Marks and Spencerism may make sense in the retail business, but it was pushed on to the Health Service.

During the debate on 31 October, in column 659, I quoted from the document that had been produced. I wish to do so again because it makes the case clearly. It states:

> "It would be open to districts to buy in part of the service from other public agencies or the private sector if this was more cost-effective, providing the quality of the service was maintained."

In other words, local health authorities were being given some sort of quota, in terms of mileage, or of financing, or the number of ambulances available. If they wanted to buy in more, they had to obtain them from the private sector. I shall be saying more about that anon, because the writing is clearly on the wall.

The way to get the costs down was by tightening up the finances. I have no objection to that, provided that the level of services for the people who need them, and their cost effectiveness and efficiency, were maintained. However, I do not necessarily think that they have been. Last summer, as everyone involved in the service in London knows, there was chaos. A letter went out from the South-West Thames regional health authority asking district health authority chairmen to cut demand by 40 per cent. It was an appealing letter, which read like a charitable letter in reverse. So the service was reduced. The results for people such as those in Newham, which is the area with the fewest cars in south-east England, were catastrophic. Those people are the least able to get out on their own, and the least able to be driven by kind neighbours — not that the people in Newham are not kind, but they do not have the same number of cars as people elsewhere. The bus service there is now under threat, and chaos, hardship and heartache have ensued.

One might say that such a threat was not intended; but its results were malign, vindictive and inhuman. The hon. Lady and the Government, who were responsible for them, may say that they did not know that that was going to be the result. However, anyone would know that a 40 per cent. cut, which was the aim, would result in those sorts of difficulties; and so it turned out. In a question that I asked on 6 November 1986—I shall read it because the hon. Lady disputed the point—I asked the Secretary of State:

> "what evidence he has received, concerning alleged non-appropriate use of the non-emergency ambulance services in London; and by what percentage those calls have changed between 1984 and 1986."

Referring to my accusation, the hon. Lady said:

> "We have no information on alleged non-appropriate use of non-emergency ambulance transport."—[*Official Report*, 6 November 1986; Vol. 103, c. *598*.]

It is clear that all this was not even based on Mr. Payne's call for a 9 to 10 per cent. reduction. It was quite baseless, apart from the desire to save money. And the Government say that the Health Service is safe in their hands.

What were the actual reductions? The hon. Lady provided me with a table, published in *Hansard* at columns *679* to *682* on 5 March 1987. The reduction in non-emergency services between the years 1984 and 1986 was 41 per cent. in London. The figures were further broken down into four divisions of the London ambulance service. I asked about the quarterly and the annual reductions. It is ironic that the biggest reduction of all—45·5 per cent. — is in the north-west division, which covers the London borough of Barnet and the constituency of the Prime Minister. Let her go to her constituents and say, "The Health Service is safe in my hands." The hon. Lady's figures show a reduction in non-emergency ambulance services of 45 per cent. in the Prime Minister's area.

Those are the facts — not the half truths that we heard in the hon. Lady's PR speech of a few minutes ago. I have challenged the hon. Lady to deny those facts.

There is more: in addition to the out-patients who are carried and who are getting better, there are out-patients who are sick and need treatment—people who, perhaps, come out of hospital rather too soon and are taken back. Out-patients are not necessarily fit and well. In addition to such people, who are carried by the London ambulance service, the districts bring in other people by services which are not run by the LAS. These are the so-called indirect services. Old people are taken by minicabs, which are difficult to get into and out of. Minicab drivers may be sympathetic and willing, but they are not skilled. That service is growing. An indirect service may be run by a contractor, too — that is being encouraged, and the increase in indirect services is quite startling. Of course, a relatively low figure is involved. It started with 212,000 miles in 1984 and increased to 346,000 miles in 1986—an increase of 63 per cent. So the public sector service in the Prime Minister's area has declined by 45 per cent., and the increase in indirect services in the whole of London has been one of 63 per cent. — services bought in from outside contractors. That is the trend.

We know that the Government, if returned to office, will privatise as much as they can. Do they wish further to privatise the non-emergency ambulance services in London, as distinct from the acute services? They appear to want to do so, because they are increasingly separating personnel.

How have the Government got away with this in the minds of the public? What about all those cancellations about which we heard? Last summer, there was chaos, and there were cancellations. In reply to questions that I have asked her, the hon. Lady has said that, in Newham hospital and in the Newham district health authority, there are now no cancellations worth mentioning. That, again, is a PR fact: we are all right; the Government say that the services are slightly increasing.

I have made inquiries about that and I understand that, because there was so much chaos, the medical staff concerned said that they could not tolerate the situation. Out-patient lists were in chaos, and people were missing appointments. An old lady who had missed eight in a row wrote to me. So the authorities concerned understandably tightened up the criteria for those whom they certificated as being able to be called for by an ambulance. In other words, what they did—as you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or I, or even the hon. Lady would have done—was say that, as the ambulances were not available, they would ensure some sort of continuity in the service. Consequently, they upped the limit, which is, to some extent, variable, as it is a matter of judgment. That is what I have been told has happened.

Other matters, too, have been dealt with in the way that anyone with common sense would deal with them. A lady, for example, who comes in once a week might be asked to come in once a fortnight. The criteria of need and

[Mr. Spearing]

requirement have now been geared to different considerations. The administrative impact of this lack of flexibility has resulted in a change in the criteria. There has been a squeeze and, as a result, no doubt the costs have fallen, but the price has been paid in the quality of service that dedicated people can give to their patients.

Another change has been the introduction into this important service of 200 part-time staff. The hon. Lady is nodding her agreement. Two hundred part-timers are now engaged in the London ambulance service and more may be recruited. I have been told — I do not have any figures to prove it—that it is possible for someone to do two part-time jobs: the economics are such that one starts early and takes people to the day centre or hospital, then has a long break, and then does a second part-time shift in the evening. This is a lowering of the standards of the staff, their expectations and their training.

I have a number of questions to ask the Minister. First, is it the DHSS's intention as it is now constituted further to separate acute ambulance services from non-emergency services in London? The hon. Lady might not be able to give an undertaking tonight but she might be able to write a letter tomorrow or on Monday to that effect. Secondly, how is the availability of money for ambulances calculated for each district health authority? In other words, what is the base? Is the Payne memorandum, which came from Downing street and which might be softened to some extent, still the basis of policy for the DHSS? Thirdly, is it the Government's policy to permit the contracting out of ambulance services to small firms or individuals?

On 6 May I asked the Secretary of State for Social Services

> "what tests of competence or other conditions relating to standards of remuneration and safety are applied by district or regional health authorities when using ambulance contractors for non-emergency ambulance services."

The answer read:

> "Health authorities are responsible for the day-to-day management of National Health Service ambulance services. It is for them to arrange the most appropriate, efficient and cost-effective means of transport for each of the patients the ambulance service is asked to convey. This may involve the use of taxi, hire car or other private contractors as well as volunteers. Standards of safety and payment to private contractors are not set centrally: health authorities are responsible for negotiating contracts locally and for setting standards of service, patient care and safety." — [*Official Report*, 6 May 1987; Vol. 115, c. *429*.]

That is a recipe for undermining the proud standards of the London ambulance service. As Winston Churchill said in this Chamber, or rather its predecessor, the bad contractor drives out the good and the worst drives out the bad. How can we expect district health authorities, with all their problems, to monitor and apply standards of decent employment and decent standards of safety? That should be done by the London ambulance service as a whole, and that is what has been done. We are faced with a recipe for undermining the quality of the service and the London ambulance service itself. I ask the Minister to deny that that will be the result of that which is proposed. We know what is happening within the bus service—I shall not pursue this—and we know also what happened on Monday. We do not want that to happen to our ambulance service. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister, the Government generally and, self-admittedly, the Minister, are driving the London ambulance service in that direction.

Does the Prime Minister care? On 2 April my hon Friend the Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) asked the Prime Minister about hot beds—two patients and one bed—in Barts. There is one person in the bed while the other is up and out of it during the middle of the day. The Prime Minister said that the practice of day surgery was welcome and claimed that expenditure in London on the Health Service had increased under her Government. She may make that claim, but the expenditure on the London ambulance service has dropped. That has been determined by what she has brought out of No. 10 Downing street. It might be said that it is only the ambulance service that has been so affected, but both the staff and the customers—our citizens — have been undermined, demoralised and dismayed.

This trend has been accompanied by a regrading of staff and a change in their terms and conditions of service. There has been a change in negotiating patterns and a reduction of public resources. There has been a threat of privatisation and in some services there has been an accompanying lack of public repute. Is it a coincidence that what has happened in the London ambulance service has been repeated to some extent in other public services such as schools, the DHSS, universities, polytechnics and sectors of the Civil Service and local government? The same formula has been applied time and again.

There is an epitaph for this Administration that comes from the experience of the London ambulance service. If anything, we have a parable, but it is almost the reverse of that of the Good Samaritan. It is the obverse of what this Administration started with following a bizarre quotation on the steps of No. 10, but one which is well known. The example is the London ambulance service, but many other areas of the public service provide it because the same formula has been used. I give the Government an epitaph as they finish their administration. It is as follows: Where there was harmony, we have brought discord; where there was truth, we have brought error; where there was faith, we have induced doubt; where there was hope, we have brought despair.

The case in respect of the London ambulance service is proven—it is clear that the service is unsafe in the Prime Minister's hands. If that is true of the London ambulance service, it is true, as I have tried to prove, of the Health Service and of the nation.

7.55 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) for raising once again the issue of the London ambulance service.

The new salary structure for ambulance men came into effect in March 1986 and it changed radically the pay arrangements for ambulance personnel. It provided an opportunity for all ambulance services to rid themselves of inefficient working practices. With the introduction of the new structure, the London ambulance service took steps to improve the front line — in other words, the emergency service that it provides. This meant that temporarily staff resources had to be transferred from non-emergency services to be redeployed on front-line work.

The South West Thames regional health authority, which manages the London ambulance service on behalf of the four Thames regions, took immediate steps to increase recruitment within the non-emergency service to make up for the shortfall. The hon. Gentleman has referred to the number of part-time employees who have been taken on, and he was right when he spoke of about 200. Part-time employees were introduced into the service a year ago to try to enable the work force in as flexible a way as possible to cover the different and increasing demands made on the service. I see nothing wrong with that.

Since March 1986 there has been a significant increase in the number of full-time ambulance staff employed. Almost every month last year about 30 recruits were undertaking training within the London ambulance service. There was a low turnover and the results have led to a substantial increase in staff. I believe that we are seeing the benefits of a sustained recruitment campaign, and I am sure that the hon Gentleman's concerns will be met in this way. I hope that he will accept that I shall scrutinise the *Official Report* and write to him on all the other issues which he has raised at very short notice this evening.

Mr. Spearing: Before the Minister sits down——

Mrs. Currie: I have sat down.

Mr. Spearing: —will she accept for the record that there was notice last week of this debate, which was given to the Minister for Health? I am grateful to the hon Lady for saying that she will write to me, but I am sorry that she will not answer my questions this evening.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at two minutes to Eight o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 15 May 1987

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITION

Leicester (Road Safety)

9.34 am

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): It is my pleasure to present to the House, in the last breath of this Parliament, a petition from the citizens of Leicester, West concerning road safety in my constituency, where too many people have been killed as a result of inadequate safety measures and because resources for taking those measures have been and remain limited. The House will be pleased to know that, as a result to no small extent of the petition presented to this House in connection with Anstey lane, agreement has been given by all concerned for the installation of road safety measures, but alas this happened only after the tragic death of a child at the crossing outside the English Martyr school.

The petition concerns an area where, perhaps because of a miracle from St. Patrick's church, outside which the danger is caused, no one has as yet been killed, and it is the prayer of my constituents that measures should be taken now so that we do not wait for a tragedy to happen. It is one of the parishioners of that church who has collected the same 150 signatures.

Therefore, I present the petition of the citizens of Leicester, West, which showeth:

"that the junction of Beaumont Leys Lane and Halifax Drive, Leicester, is a place of grave danger to those who need to cross there,

Wherefore, your Petitioners pray that Your Honourable House will support the Petitioners in their campaign for a crossing to be made at that place."

To lie upon the Table.

Asylum Seekers (Heathrow)

9.37 am

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether you could help me.

Earlier this week I made an application under Standing Order No. 20 for a special debate about the group of Kurdish people from Iraq who had arrived in this country and sought political asylum. For understandable reasons, you were not able to grant that debate. However, is there any way that we can receive a statement or undertaking from the Home Office in these last moments of this Parliament about the plight of these 24 people? A stop on their removal was refused by the Home Secretary after consultation with the Prime Minister on the ground that they would not be returned to Iraq from Syria if they were removed from this country. After that, their barrister then sought and obtained leave to seek judicial review, which was granted.

My concern is that these families have now been held in custody at the airport and other places for upwards of 10 days. Two of them have attempted suicide, and twice they have all been put on a plane, but the pilot has refused to take them out of the country. Now the Government seem determined to remove them to Syria where, quite clearly, there is some danger that, at a later stage, they could be removed to Iraq to face a certain death penalty.

May we receive an undertaking from the Home Office that it is prepared to accept stops on removals from retiring Members of the House between now and the bringing together of the new Parliament? Secondly, will it be prepared to abide by the terms and wording of the Geneva convention on refugees so that the people arriving in this country and seeking political asylum and fearing a return to certain death are not rejected by immigration officers without reference to Ministers?

Quite clearly, the implication is that the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Bill is being operated, although it is not yet law, and that Ministers are not involving themselves in decisions but are leaving them to the low-level immigration officers who are making decisions that have life and death implications for these people.

Mr. Speaker: I understand and appreciate the hon. Gentleman's concern for the unfortunate refugees, but the hon. Gentleman will know that the matter that he raises is not a question of order. I am sure that what he has said today will have been heard by the Government Front Bench. It is possible that a statement could be made on the matter at 11 o'clock, but I am afraid that I cannot help the hon. Gentleman further than that.

Mr. Laurie Pavitt (Brent, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps you could give us some guidance as to the position on immigration cases between now and 11 June for Members who will not be returning to the House. As you will know, I have many such cases every week. Am I still entitled until 11 June to raise with the Home Office the possibility of intervention on behalf of a person being held at Heathrow or Gatwick?

Mr. Speaker: First, I should say how warmly we welcome the hon. Gentleman back today. After Parliament is dissolved, there are no Members of Parliament, but in the period between Dissolution and the

[Mr. Speaker]

new Parliament it is, of course, possible for the hon. Gentleman to make representations to the Home Office in his private capacity as an ex-Member of Parliament.

Captain Simon Hayward

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

9.41 am

Mr. John Gorst (Hendon, North): As these will be among the last words spoken in this Parliament, it is fitting that we should reflect on one of the most fundamental issues which have concerned us in this century and in days gone by and which, one hopes, will continue to concern us for as long as we have Parliaments. Indeed, the points of order that have been raised today illustrate this very point. The issues to which I refer are matters of conscience, liberty and justice. We discuss them as they affect whole populations and at the level of the most insignificant individual. We debate with anger, with passion, with rationality, and with a great concern for truth and decency. That is what this departing Parliament is and has been for, and what the new Parliament will be for when it assembles.

It is appropriate that with its last breath the House should turn its attention to the plight of an individual and that it should mirror a concern for human rights and justice and the maltreatment of one single but perhaps not entirely ordinary human being. Captain Simon Hayward is a man of exceptional integrity and service to his Queen and country. Nothing can be more daunting than the plight of a powerless citizen confronted by the overweening majesty of an all-powerful state. It is thus entirely proper that this House should adjourn after discussing such a fundamental issue which as I have said, lies at the very core of Parliament's existence.

Exactly 63 days ago, Captain Simon Hayward, a 31-year-old captain in the Life Guards, was arrested in Sweden. He was driving a Jaguar car, belonging to his brother Christopher, back to England from Ibiza where he had been on holiday. The considerable extra distance that he was travelling was to enable him to put in a couple of days ski-ing at the invitation of a casual acquaintance known to his brother. That acquaintance, thought by Captain Hayward to be a Swede and using a Swedish-sounding name, was in fact a Scotsman known as Cay Forbes Mitchell who, it seems, had been under observation by the Swedish police for a considerable time, suspected of being involved in drug trafficking.

Following information received, I believe, the Swedish police closed in on Captain Hayward's car shortly after he had kept a pre-arranged rendezvous with Mitchell in a Swedish provincial town. In due course, half a million pounds worth of well-hidden drugs were discovered in the car. I understand that several Swedes have been arrested in connection with the case and that all of them, as well as Mitchell, are alleged to have confessed their complicity. Captain Hayward, however, has protested his innocence throughout and his strong belief that the drugs consignment could have been hidden in the car when it was stolen in Ibiza and recovered by the Spanish police just hours before his departure from the island. I understand that the Swedish police have issued a warrant in absentia for the arrest of Captain Hayward's brother, Christopher, who has since disappeared. It appears, therefore, that the police do not accept that Captain Hayward was the unsuspecting dupe of a highly professional drugs ring.

Whether Christopher Hayward is alive or dead, no one can say for certain. Chief Inspector Bihlar, who is in charge of the investigation, said to me in front of the British consul that if he went to Ibiza to investigate the case himself he feared that he might be murdered. It is thus not entirely fanciful to speculate that such a fate might have befallen Christopher Hayward if he was innocent or that he might be afraid for his life. Before dealing with any of those circumstances and their implications, however, I will explain how I come to be concerned with the case and why I believe that it has more far-reaching significance.

At the outset, two considerations will be universally accepted by my hon. Friend the Minister, by both sides of the House and, above all, by the Swedes. First, everything connected with the supply and sale of narcotics is evil and despicable, its capacity for causing misery and destruction is callous and brutal, and those who engage in this inhuman trade deserve the severest penalties. On that, there can be no disagreement by anyone.

Secondly, the due processes of detection, arrest, trial and punishment are for each sovereign state, whether Swedish or British, to determine according to its own constitutional practices. We should as bitterly resent interference by Sweden in the internal legal procedures of the United Kingdom as the Swedes would rightly resent any such interference by us. On those two matters, I believe that we are all in agreement.

There are, however, aspects of our bilateral relations which impose upon this House a duty to study the legal practices in our respective countries. First, both countries are signatories to the European convention on human rights. Secondly, we have a bilateral treaty or other arrangements for extradition with every signatory to the convention, with the exception of Ireland, Turkey and Liechtenstein. Thirdly, it is unthinkable that we should keep an extradition treaty in existence with a country whose legal procedures we regard as alien to our own notions of natural justice and humanity, especially if those procedures are not in accordance with the European convention.

In the course of this debate, I shall seek to show, by reference to known facts, that Sweden is at best in violation of the spirit of the European convention on human rights, that its pre-trial procedures specifically are contrary to natural justice, that the case of Captain Simon Hayward illustrates that contention and is not an isolated case affecting just one British citizen, and that without interfering or dictating to the Swedes about how they administer justice to their own people or to people visiting their country we should suspend the extradition treaty of 1966 until we are satisfied that the provisions of articles 3, 5, 6 and possibly 17 of the European convention are complied with in both spirit and letter. We should do that until such time as Sweden is prepared to adopt pre-trial procedures that are in accordance with universally accepted standards.

If the Minister thinks that this is a drastic and precipitant step to take, I hope that he will reflect on Sweden's record in this area. It is certainly not an unblemished one. Sweden is not a first-time offender. It has been arraigned before the Court of Human Rights in the case of McGoff versus Sweden and found to have been in violation of article 5.3. The issue involved was not being brought promptly before a judge. It was found to have been in violation of the same article in the case of Skoogstrom versus Sweden. Both cases were within this decade.

I shall now return to the description of the circumstances involved in the case of Captain Simon Hayward and I shall begin with an explanation of how I came to take an interest in the matter. Captain Hayward is not a constituent of mine, but, as a serving officer in the Life Guards who has been on classified duty in Northern Ireland for the past two years, I do not think that he is a constituent of any hon. Member. Before I visited Captain Hayward on the 54th day of his solitary confinement in Uppsala I had never met any of his family or friends.

Captain Hayward was brought to see me three or four years ago by a well-known film producer who had been invited to do a documentary film on a proposed Life Guards expedition to Africa. It was running into problems that it was felt I could help to resolve. I met Captain Hayward and two of his fellow officers on about half a dozen occasions. I was struck not only by his exceptional straightforwardness but by his sense of duty towards the men under his command. In every respect he typified the highest traditions of one of the British Army's finest regiments. What I am trying to say to the House is that Captain Hayward struck me then as an individual of transparent integrity. Judge then my surprise when I learnt from the press in late March that he had been arrested in connection with a squalid and disreputable drug peddling activity. I did what I believe any hon. Member would do if he thought intuitively that a ghastly mistake had overtaken an innocent person. I wrote to Captain Hayward through the good offices of the Swedish embassy, to which I explained my interest in the case. I offered Captain Hayward help if there was anything I could do and I promised to visit him in the summer if the Select Committee of which I am a member had business that took me to Sweden.

In due course the helpful Swedish authorities in London confirmed in writing that a visit would be possible, that my letter had been forwarded to Captain Hayward and that the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs would contact our embassy in Stockholm, through which arrangements for my visit should subsequently be made.

I dwell on those details because of the extraordinary allegations from the Uppsala prosecutor and police that have appeared in the press in Sweden since my visit on 5 and 6 May. Perhaps I shall conjecture later about their motives. However, at this stage, suffice it to explain to the House that from my knowledge of what our embassy did and said on my behalf, its actions were scrupulously accurate and entirely correct. Furthermore, I must inform the House that on Tuesday of this week I issued a writ for libel against the *Daily Telegraph* because of its issue of 8 May in which it said in a headline:

> "MP 'lied to Swedish police' for interview with guards officer."

That headline was toned down in subsequent editions to read:

> "Swedes angered by MP's jail visit to guards officer."

Since there has been speculation in Sweden about whether I went there in a so-called private or official capacity, let me make the position quite clear. I do not know what Sweden meant by "official", but everyone in the House will certainly know what is meant when I say that I went there in my capacity as a British Member of Parliament. To our way of thinking, nothing could be more official than that.

In the middle of April I received an acknowledgement from Captain Hayward to the letter I had sent to him. He

[Mr. John Gorst]

told me very little except that he protested his innocence while admitting the gravity of the circumstantial evidence against him. He invited me to contact one of his military superiors who had visited him in detention. In two long telephone conversations with that senior officer I established many of the facts and I heard the explanations for all the known supicions held by the police. My intuitive feeling of Captain Hayward's innocence was then translated into a more reasoned one. I shared his senior officer's belief in his innocence and believed that he was being held in solitary confinement in circumstances that gave me reason to suspect that the police hoped not to prove his guilt but to entice another suspect, his brother Chrisopher, to come forward.

It was the intolerable suspicion that an innocent man was being held as bait that prompted me to inform my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, in a brief conversation on 30 April, that I would welcome a further meeting with her if I returned from my visit to Sweden on the following bank holiday Monday as convinced of Captain Hayward's innocence as I was before I left. The Prime Minister indicated her willingness to see me if I chose to seek a meeting with her.

A British citizen who has not yet been charged with any offence has been in solitary confinement for 63 days. Month by month a Swedish court sitting in secret is asked to continue that solitary confinement on the grounds that the police are presumably continuing their investigations. Meanwhile, a man against whom there is nothing more tangible than the fact that he unknowingly drove a car in which drugs were hidden remains in isolation.

Until recently Captain Hayward had been given no privileges. Now, the so-called privileges of correspondence, visits, newspapers, sweets, radio and television are provided or withdrawn in an indiscriminatory and arbitrary fashion. The prosecutor and police issue damning or damaging statements to the press and on television. They denigrate visitors like myself and make such visits a pretext for refusing any other visits to him —friends and family, in particular. We have absolutely no influence or control over this matter. The Swedish authorities have no control or influence over what any Member of Parliament says. Nevertheless, the Swedish authorities refuse access to him even by the family solicitor, Sir David Napley. Why do they behave in that fashion? Why cannot justice not only be done but be seen to be done? Is this a sophisticated, genteel, humanised version of the intolerable technique known as brainwashing?

Captain Hayward is a healthy, resilient, 31-year-old man. There is no doubt about his healthy physical condition. However, the same cannot be said of his psychological state. When I saw him nine days ago in the presence of the police and of the British consul, he had red rings around his eyes, his manner was subdued and apologetic, his speech was hesitant and faltering and at times he gave way silently to totally untypical emotion.

The day I left Captain Hayward he wrote me a letter which the authorities allowed to get through to me. It is only after deep thought that I quote from it. It is a private letter and I have not been able to seek his permission to quote from it. However, if the case that I am making is to contain any form of credibility, I feel obliged to quote certain parts of it. In the letter of 5 May he said:

> "may I apologise for being so wet and for letting my emotions show but as you will realise I am not in the best frame of mind at present. One day I must sit down with you and analyse the effects of all this, but perhaps now is not appropriate. I am afraid though, that the pressures of my situation have slowly built up on me. It is not so much being in solitary confinement but all the other factors accumulating with isolation that seem to make one feel rather miserable. I don't wish to be seen to be stooping to self pity but I hope this explains my behaviour during our discussions.
>
> This whole affair is so unreal—I still can't quite believe it is happening . . . Above all I have a feeling of intense embarrassment . . . I also hope that my answers to your questions were satisfactory—my mind is not very clear at the moment and I am having difficulty in concentrating, so please forgive me if I was less than verbose."

Contradictorily, he ended his letter by saying:

> "despite appearances I am fine."

The letter deeply disturbed me after my observations of Captain Hayward. It is absolutely clear—I have now consulted many people who know him intimately—that he is significantly disorientated. I have now pursued a number of other inquiries to establish what may be happening to him. The National Council for the Welfare of Prisoners Abroad approached me the day before yesterday. That organisation was established about eight years ago. The council told me that not only is my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler), who is a former prison governor, associated with it but also the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lords Gifford, Beaumont and Soper. Therefore, I have no doubt about the council's respectability and integrity.

The National Council for the Welfare of Prisoners Abroad, which has expressed deep concern about pre-trial practices is Sweden, put me in touch with a British subject who spent many months in solitary confinement in Sweden. I quote a verbatim record of my conversation with that British subject. He said:

> "I read books. Just to keep my sanity, I read a lot of books. Wrote a lot while I was in isolation. I came out and I couldn't read another book for six months. All I wanted to do was to be with people—whatever I did. It was just like having to learn to be with people again. It is very hard to explain the feeling . . . It is a very unpleasant and inhuman thing to do to somebody. I've often talked about it with other people and we have discussed which is better: a physical torture or a mental torture. In all honesty, many of us would prefer to be beaten—just pushed around a bit for four or five days—and then to be put with our fellow human beings, than to spend six or seven months in solitary confinement. I haven't suffered the beatings. But other prisoners I have met have been in prison in Spain and France—and not beaten with sticks, but they got pushed around and smacked about the face a little bit . . . but they say they would honestly take that any day to six or seven months in isolation . . . Mentally, you are fighting a battle that they are trying to make you say something that maybe you did or maybe you didn't do. But you don't want to say it. When they lock you up, it is like psychological disorientation. They just want to break you."

After helpful professional comments by my hon. Friend the Member for Reading, East (Sir G. Vaughan), who is not only a former Minister for Health but also a qualified psychiatrist, I contacted other eminent psychiatrists suggested by him. Their observations were deeply disturbing. Dr. Anthony Flood, a psychiatrist at St. Luke's hospital, agreed that from Captain Hayward's letter and from my descriptions it was clear that Captain Hayward would be disorientated.

I spoke to a consultant forensic psychiatrist with whom I had been put in touch by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. I had asked the college to refer me to somebody with specialist knowledge of the possible effects of solitary confinement on a normal human being. I described to Dr. Paul Bowden of the Maudsley hospital — he also works for the Home Office entirely in connection with prisoners — what I had observed of Captain Hayward. I also read to him the entire contents of the letter I have just referred to.

Dr. Bowden's comments were as follows. He said, "His response to the conditions of this detention reflect that he has been improperly detained. I don't know the details of the conditions of this detention. All I know is that, however he is being detained, it is having an adverse effect on his mental health." I asked, "What do you mean by improperly?" He replied, "To the extent that he is becoming mentally disordered as a result of the conditions of his detention, his detention is not conducive to good mental health." I asked, "Might his treatment prejudice him at his trial?" He said, "Even if he is innocent, he might come to believe he is in some way guilty and, in that frame of mind, he would be unable to effectively defend himself against the charges." I asked, "What is your opinion of Captain Hayward's present condition judged from my description of his state when I saw him on 5 May"— after he had been in detention for 54 days—"and from the evidence of his letter to me written on that day?" Dr. Bowden replied, "He is undergoing severe emotional reaction. His mental state is precarious. Unless the situation is altered, he will get a good deal worse. This view, incidentally, is irrespective of whether he is innocent or guilty." I asked, "How might his condition deteriorate from now onwards?" He replied, "He would start losing his sense of identity. He could begin to create around himself an artificial world. At the extreme, he could even go mad in trying to make his own illusory world."

It is not for us to conduct a trial of Captain Hayward. He has not yet been charged with any offence. This is a matter for the Swedish authorities. What must concern us is that he has not been accused of a crime. Under a Swedish law—I believe that it is called sanalika skäl—a person arrested for a crime committed beyond reasonable doubt will go to prison for it unless he can prove that he did not do it. He is guilty until he can prove himself to be innocent.

I do not know whether that provision has been invoked in the case of Captain Hayward, but I know that he has been treated and penalised as though he was a criminal. How can a British person held in solitary confinement prove his innocence without benefit of family, friends, or even a British lawyer? He has only the Swedish lawyer appointed by the Swedish court. I have no reason to criticise his defence lawyer, Mr. Tom Placht, whom I have met. I am sure that he is doing his utmost, including visiting London at this very moment, but I wonder whether it is in the interests of total justice that he cannot be joined by a British lawyer who can explain the way in which Britons and Swedes differ in their behaviour and thinking.

Her Majesty's Government should take one step as a matter of urgency. I have drawn attention to the disorientation from which I believe Captain Hayward to be suffering. I have quoted the views of qualified psychiatrists on the possible consequences of solitary confinement. I suggest to my hon. Friend the Minister that the Swedish authorities be asked to allow regular independent checks to be made by professionally qualified experts so that Captain Hayward's condition can be monitored regularly while he is in detention and until he is brought to trial, if that is to be the case.

I cannot accept that such monitoring should be done under the supervision of the Swedish prosecutor or his police colleagues. By their distorted and partial statements to the press, they have forfeited any claim to impartiality, and by their whimsical denial of access to Captain Hayward they have reinforced the impression that they are employing dubious psychological techniques that have been rightly condemned by all civilised Governments. I would not mind an invitation to a suitably qualified Red Cross expert or a specialist such as a Home Office forensic psychiatrist. Both would be well qualified.

I am aware that officials at the British embassy in Stockholm have visited Captain Hayward. Indeed, he was visited only last night. But neither they, I, nor Captain Hayward himself, let alone his family, are experts in psychological manipulation. I believe that Captain Hayward should and will be proved innocent, but what an experience he has suffered. On Wednesday, Amnesty International told me about the case of a British subject just released by the Swedish courts having been found not guilty of a murder charge. He had been held in solitary confinement for 13 months. He has now started proceedings against the Swedish state, but what compensation could eradicate the mental scars that he will have to carry throughout his life?

A legal expert in the Swedish Ministry of Justice told me that there are provisions for appeal after conviction, and that appeals may be made even after a full sentence has been completed. He told me that if the appeal on new evidence is upheld, the victim may sue the state for damages. But how much money could compensate an outstanding British officer such as Simon Hayward for the violation of his dignity as a human being? What value can be placed on the interruption of his brave activities on behalf of this country? Do we not as a nation also have a claim for the loss of his services? What price can be put on the distress caused to his mother, who is denied the opportunity to visit him? How do we assess the lost hours, days, weeks and months for his girlfriend, his family and his other friends? They have suffered great anguish and feel a deep sense of injustice. If he is guilty, he deserves punishment; but to be punished, he must first be tried. That has yet to be done. In the meantime he is receiving a disorientating, dangerous, debilitating punishment that can never be eradicated. It is happening now, and nothing will extinguish its haunting memory.

The heart of my argument against the Swedish pre-trial procedures is that, guilty or innocent, it is no way to treat a suspect. That is why I ask the Minister to re-examine our legal arrangements with Sweden and, if appropriate, to annul them. A fundamental assumption of the European Convention on Human Rights is that preserving the rights of innocent people is more precious to a free society than putting the villains who threaten it behind bars. Justice must be tempered with mercy, but it must be administered with humanity. The system that I am questioning derives from the notion that the end justifies the means: that convicting the guilty justifies crucifying the innocent. It is a repugnant concept.

Sweden is a long-standing friend of Britain. We admire its social enlightenment and respect its ancient cultural traditions and achievements. We have a warm regard for its friendly people. Simon Hayward may have a case to answer before the Swedish courts, but Sweden has a case to answer before world opinion.

10.16 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I am extremely grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, North (Mr. Gorst) for raising this case. It is especially appropriate that the penultimate debate of this Parliament should be devoted to discussing the circumstances of an individual British citizen. It is in the finest traditions of the way in which this place operates.

As the House would expect, I shall consider carefully all the points made by my hon. Friend. I have especially noted his comments on Captain Hayward's character, his state of mind and the assessment of my hon. Friend and experts of the effects of solitary confinement on Captain Hayward. Of course, I shall ensure that the record of this debate is made available to the Swedish embassy in London as soon as possible.

Mr. Gorst: Will my hon. Friend use his best endeavours to ensure that the *Hansard* report of this debate is made available to Captain Hayward?

Mr. Eggar: I assure my hon. Friend that, in so far as it is within our power, we shall make sure that such documents are made available to Captain Hayward.

I shall comment now on some of the more detailed points made by my hon. Friend, but I will read carefully the record of his speech and comment further in writing to him. Sweden's record on human rights is well known, and we believe that it takes very seriously its responsibilities under the European Convention on Human Rights. I am sure that it will study my hon. Friend's comments carefully.

As my hon. Friend knows, Captain Hayward has been visited on several occasions by our consular staff and has not made specific complaints about the conditions of his detention. If Swedish legal procedures are not properly applied, that is a matter for Captain Hayward's defence lawyer to raise with the appropriate authorities in Sweden. As my hon. Friend has stressed, we understand that Sir David Napley was not denied access to Captain Hayward but was denied access without the presence of a police officer. In other words, a condition was put on Sir David Napley's access.

Our present understanding of the position on private visits is that further family visits have been temporarily suspended, but, as my hon. Friend recognises, that is a matter for the Swedish authorities.

Mr. Gorst: While I understand what my hon. Friend is saying, does he concede that the giving and withdrawing of privileges is a well-known technique of brainwashing?

Mr. Eggar: I have noted my hon. Friend's comments. However, I am afraid that I must again stress to him that that is a matter for the Swedish authorities. I do not want to pass judgment on the technique to which he has referred.

I understand that a number of visits have been allowed by Captain Hayward's mother, girlfriend and commanding officer. I am told that the first such visit by his mother was allowed in late March, less than two weeks after his arrest. As I have previously told my hon. Friend, Captain Hayward was visited yesterday by our vice consul, who reported that Captain Hayward appeared to be in good spirits and that he had no complaints to make.

My hon. Friend referred also to the position of the English lawyer who was appointed by Captain Hayward's family. I must advise my hon. Friend that in the United Kingdom a foreign lawyer would not be allowed to represent a client in court. I believe that that puts into context Sir David Napley's standing under Swedish law.

My hon. Friend specifically asked whether we could request the Swedes to allow regular independent checks on Captain Hayward's state of mind. We shall certainly make such requests if Captain Hayward specifically requests us to do so. I am sure that Captain Hayward will be enabled to be aware of the arguments, assuming that the Swedish authorities are happy to allow a record of the debate to reach him.

Mr. Gorst: This is perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the case. From my inquiries, I believe that any prisoner would regard himself as being at risk of penalties if he were to make such a request. I do not know whether Captain Hayward would wish to make such requests. When I spoke to him, in an interview that lasted about 90 minutes, he was plainly not making any criticisms. However, when one observes his general demeanour, one wonders whether he is aware of his present conditions.

Mr. Eggar: I accept my hon. Friend's point entirely. However, our consular authority's relationship is in this case directly with the prisoner, Captain Hayward. Therefore, we cannot take official action with the Swedish authorities without his specific say so.

It may assist the House if I set out the series of events as perceived by Her Majesty's Government, following the notification of Captain Hayward's arrest, and comment briefly on the actions taken by the Government.

On the afternoon of 17 March, Captain Hayward telephoned the vice consul of the British embassy in Stockholm to say that he had been arrested on 13 March. He requested a visit. At the same time, we learnt that another British citizen had been arrested. However, we have not been asked to assist that other British citizen in any way. The Swedish police confirmed the arrest the same day to the embassy, adding that Captain Hayward, along with the other British national, had been arrested at Uppsala for possession of a large quantity of cannabis. They were being held at Osteraker. The consular department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was immediately informed by the vice consul in Stockholm. The Department promptly ascertained from the Ministry of Defence that Captain Hayward's mother had been informed.

On the same day, 17 March, Captain Hayward's mother telephoned Her Majesty's embassy in Stockholm suggesting that she should go to Sweden. After the embassy had discussed the proposal with the Swedish police, Mrs. Hayward was informed that she would not, at that time, be allowed access to her son but that she would be notified as soon as a visit would be permitted.

The vice consul visited Captain Hayward the following day, 18 March, at the police station in Vasteras. Captain Hayward made no complaints about the conditions of detention. The vice consul spoke to the Uppsala police inspector about legal representation, explaining that Her Majesty's embassy maintained a list of local lawyers which may be of help to Captain Hayward. However, Captain Hayward's brother telephoned from London to the embassy to say that the family would be appointing a lawyer. The police inspector informed the embassy the following day, 19 March, that a court hearing was to be held, probably on 23 March, at Uppsala and that a lawyer had been appointed.

On 20 March, Captain Hayward informed the embassy that the hearing had been arranged for 24 March. A closed court hearing was, as planned, held on that day in Uppsala. Captain Hayward was further remanded in custody until 25 May pending further court investigation. We understand that Mrs. Hayward was able to visit her son on 26 March and then again at the end of April, when she was accompanied by Captain Hayward's girlfriend.

In the meantime, on 22 April, the Swedish police had issued an arrest order for Captain Hayward's brother, Christopher, "in absentia", as my hon. Friend has said.

Her Majesty's consul and the military attaché were able to visit Captain Hayward at Uppsala police headquarters on 28 April. As my hon. Friend has said, he visited Captain Hayward on 5 May.

The consular department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was informed in a letter from my hon. Friend, dated 30 April, that he proposed to visit Captain Hayward and I discussed the case with him personally for the third time on the same day.

Our embassy in Stockholm was immediately informed and, at my hon. Friend's request, sought to obtain permission for the visit to Captain Hayward and to arrange appointments for my hon. Friend with the Swedish Commissioner of Police, an appropriate official in the Ministry of Justice, Captain Hayward's lawyer, and someone at the embassy who could talk to him about Swedish legal procedures.

As my hon. Friend is aware, the Swedish authorities initially refused permission for a visit on the ground that it was a private visit. Following discussion with my hon. Friend, the embassy informed the Swedish authorities that, in its view, my hon. Friend was there in an official capacity as a Member of Parliament. Thereupon, the Swedish authorities permitted the visit.

On arrival in Sweden on 4 May, my hon. Friend was met by our vice consul and taken to Uppsala to meet the defence lawyer, Mr. Tom Placht, then to Stockholm to meet Ministry of Justice officials. On 5 May, the consul took my hon. Friend to Uppsala to see the head of the local police, and subsequently was permitted to visit Captain Hayward for approximately one hour.

I do not wish to underestimate in any way the circumstances of Captain Hayward's arrest and detention, but I must emphasise that the law in Sweden allows for long periods of custody until the prosecutor is ready either to charge or release the person being investigated. It is the usual practice for people arrested for serious offences—this is regarded as such — to be kept in solitary confinement. I understand that Captain Hayward is now allowed to listen to the BBC world service, watch television and read British newspapers and books. He is permitted one hour's exercise a day. This is in keeping with the Swedish practice for all such detainees of whatever nationality, and such provisions apply equally to Swedish nationals.

It may be helpful to the House in general if I describe the role of our consular officials overseas when dealing with the arrest and detention of British nationals.

Mr. Gorst: I would point out that when Mrs. Hayward applied to be allowed to visit her son after my visit, she was told, "No, you cannot visit him, because of the visit of that MP." In other words, she is apparently being penalised for what I, as an independent Member of Parliament, who had never met her before going to Sweden, had done in what I believe to be the interests of Captain Hayward.

Mr. Eggar: I have taken careful note of what my hon. Friend says. One must bear in mind that there was initial resistance from the Swedish authorities to my hon. Friend's visit. I understand that one of the arguments was that Captain Hayward had received a considerable number of private visits. As my hon. Friend is well aware, visits are under the control of the local authorities in Sweden, and we must simply accept that they have discretion in those matters. I appreciate my hon. Friend's concern that Captain Hayward's mother should appear to have been penalised, if that is the appropriate word, for actions that were said to have been taken by my hon. Friend. I understand his anxiety.

As my hon. Friend made clear, it is internationally accepted practice that officials or representatives of one state cannot intervene in the judicial proceedings of another sovereign state. As he said, we in the United Kingdom would not tolerate attempted foreign intervention in our judicial system. The role of consular officials is limited to visiting the detainee as soon as possible after arrest or detention, unless the offence is a minor one, to ensure that the British citizen's rights under local law are fully explained and that they know how to obtain legal representation, if desired. A consular official will try to ensure that a British national is charged and brought to trial without delay, that the trial is conducted within the recognised canons of justice, that their alien status is not detrimental either at a trial or during imprisonment and that they are subject to the same standards as apply to the nationals of the country in which they were arrested.

It is our policy that, after an initial visit, further consular visits will be made in the light of local conditions and the detainee's circumstances. Our consular officials will also ensure that a detainee's next-of-kin is informed of the detention, but only if so requested by the detainee. They will also arrange the transfer of funds from friends or family in the United Kingdom for prison comforts, and raise any complaints with the proper authorities.

The United Nations approved minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners in 1957. While the rules have no binding force, our consular officials as a matter of policy would bring them to the attention of the local authorities, if it was seen that the rules were not being observed in respect of a British detainee.

There are limitations on what consular officials can do. They cannot get a national out of gaol, provide a lawyer at Her Majesty's Government's expense, put up bail or carry out investigations into any alleged crime, nor can they offer legal advice.

A consular convention does in fact exist between the United Kingdom and Sweden. Under that convention, a consular officer is permitted, without delay, to converse privately with, and to arrange legal representation for, any British national who is confined or detained. Any communication to the consular officer must be forwarded without delay by the Swedish authorities.

The consular officer, upon notification to the appropriate authority, has the right to visit; but any visit must be conducted in accordance with the regulations in force in the institution in which the British national is detained. It is, however, understood that such regulations

[Mr. Eggar]

should permit reasonable access and opportunity of conversation. I must emphasise that our consular officers in Sweden must operate within the parameters of the convention and Swedish law.

I shall consider carefully all the points that my hon. Friend has made, particularly those relating to the mental condition of Captain Hayward. I shall, as appropriate, ensure that they are taken up with the relevant Swedish authorities and, in particular, I shall do what I can to make certain that the record of this debate is passed on to Captain Hayward, subject, naturally, to agreement by the Swedish authorities.

While I fully understand my hon. Friend's concern, I am afraid that the Swedish legal process must take its course. Her Majesty's Government have no standing to intervene in that legal process, although, through our consular officials, we shall continue to monitor the case closely and to offer all the assistance to Captain Hayward that we properly can.

Small Businesses

10.35 am

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): This Adjournment debate on small businesses is extremely appropriate, because if there is one section of the economy in which the Government have been successful above all, and they have been successful in most, it is in assisting the development of small firms and businesses.

Since 1979 a record number of new businesses have been created. That has not happened by any accident; it has been brought about by the favourable economic climate and by people who have adopted an attitude which perhaps we had lost over the past half century. They realised that the opportunity exists for them to create what they wish to create easily and ably. Perhaps it is also now generally accepted that a self-employed person is not some sort of crook who is trying to deceive the tax man but someone who has an important role to play in our economy. He may create his little business employing just himself, whether as a decorator or a plumber, and develop it into something more substantial by building on his business experience and reputation within the community which he serves. To be self-employed — at one time, perhaps, denigrated — is now a respectable, laudable occupation. Such people can feel proud indeed to play their growing and important part in our economy.

The Labour party has always believed first and foremost in spending wealth, but it has paid little attention to the role of creating it. Unless we create wealth, we have none to spend. Over the past eight years the Government have been successful in creating the wealth which we can now spend on, for example, increased National Health Service expenditure. It is now running at record levels in real terms, let alone in money terms, and that has been brought about because more than any Government in the past we have paid attention to the role of the wealth-creating sector.

The wealth-creating sector is not merely big business. Many big businesses have had to rationalise and change their outlook. The huge number of small businesses created since 1979 has increased the Exchequer take from industry and commerce through paying their taxes which can then be redistributed in our social welfare benefit systems.

The legacy bequeathed to us in 1979 was a hopelessly unproductive economy. Let me make no bones about it. From the last war we inherited sloppy industrial relations and sloppy management and somehow the belief, still, that the world owed Britain a living. This Government had to take dramatic decisions. They had to say that the feather bedding must stop because we no longer had an empire or a Commonwealth and that we must make our own way in an increasingly competitive world. The Government had to make some very difficult decisions affecting many of our old established industries. Of course, that is nothing to be ashamed of.

From time immemorial the trade unions have been shouting for investment. Some of the leading trade unionists asked how could we compete with the rest of the world, including the Germans, the Japanese and the Americans, with outdated manufacturing processes and lack of investment in industry. They also pointed to the failure by management to spend the money necessary to introduce the new equipment when, in the eyes of the trade unionists, that money was going into the pockets of shareholders in the form of profit taking.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): My hon. Friend must have made a slight slip of the tongue when he said that we no longer have a Commonwealth. What he possibly meant was that through the development and fostering of small businesses we have been able to generate common wealth among people as a whole. We certainly have a Commonwealth and I am sure that my hon. Friend would not want to see it reported in his local press that we have not.

Mr. King: I thank my hon. Friend for his comments and I take his chastisement. Perhaps I was interpreting commonwealth in the literal sense. As I understand it, Britain exchanged its manufactured goods for raw materials with the old empire that we called the Commonwealth. Of course we still have a Commonwealth of nations and long may it remain, because it has an important role to play in world affairs. Our industrial position in the world has been affected because many of the Commonwealth countries are looking at alternative sources of supply for their finished goods and for the materials that they require and are looking less towards the United Kingdom. We have an opportunity to provide much of what they want.

There is a well-recorded and documented recent incident about the Indian navy which wanted to place an order for a new type of warship. Two yards were suggested, one in Aberdeen I believe, and one in Korea. The Aberdeen yard was more competitive than the one in Korea, but by some sleight of hand somewhere the Koreans were able to reduce the price by about £6 million and the Indian navy gave the contract to the Korean yard.

In the way in which I used to understand the Commonwealth it is not now so much a Commonwealth in terms of tied markets for our goods and their raw materials, because we are very much in competition with the rest of the world. For some time trade unions have been demanding that British industry should improve its productivity and invest heavily. The Labour Government of the 1970s paid only lip service to the role of employment in industry. Initiative was taxed away and it was not worth a candle to speculate by investing heavily in new factory plant and equipment.

A substantial risk is involved in starting up a business. I know that because I went through the process in 1974. I started a business in October of that year on the day that Labour got elected. However, that was not a mistake, because the business prospered and a good portion of it is still there. The attitude of the Labour Government to taxing the individual deterred many new business starts. It is relevant that we should remember Labour's tax on jobs, the national insurance surcharge.

This Government are criticised for not cutting taxation enough, but our critics forget that about £3 billion of taxation, brought about by Labour's terrible surcharge, was placed upon the people who were employed and was nothing more than a tax on jobs. It had a dramatic effect in causing industry to shake out the people that it did not want. Industry was not prepared to take any chances and if people were surplus or even partly surplus to production capacity, industrialists were no longer prepared to pay the penal rates of national insurance, and people were made redundant. That meant that in the dying throes of the Labour Government unemployment doubled. The Labour Government built up a momentum of unemployment that was difficult for us to stop when we came in to clear up the mess that Labour had made.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): It is important to emphasise that during the period when Labour were in Government the number of self-employed people dropped by 100,000. That is an incredible figure.

Mr. King: My hon. Friend has made the point very lucidly. Of course Labour did not mention the small business man in 1979, or, indeed, in 1983. That species of business man, so essential for our wealth creating process, was totally ignored. I understand that Labour's manifesto for this election has been written on a postage stamp because Labour do not want to go into too much detail. I do not blame Labour for that, but I doubt if that manifesto will refer at all to what Labour intends to do, if it is elected, about continuing to build on the work that this Government have carried out in reconstituting small businesses as an important area of our economy.

Whether we like it or not the shake-out of jobs from large manufacturers has been inexorable and there is no point in trying to put back the clock. In the car industry in particular one can see what happens when the investment that the trade unions wanted has gone into manufacturing capacity. Robots have been installed and integrated manufacturing systems and computer-aided design and manufacture have enabled us completely to change our outlook on manufacturing. Those things have also changed our capacity to produce cars and other products, such as washing machines and refrigerators, on a par with the best of our competitors.

Investment has not proved to be the way forward in employment within our traditional industries. Therefore, we have had to pay a great deal more attention to other areas where any investment that is going can be used to create jobs. Over the past few years the modernisation of industry has gone ahead so fast that other sectors of industry have not been able to take up the many people who have lost employment. Happily, the take-up has now been increased because we are creating more real jobs than any other country.

Much comment is made about the relevance of unemployment, but yesterday more people went to work in Britian than at any time in our history. Today a few more will go to work and on Monday a few more still. the signs now are extremely encouraging and new businesses play an increasng part in creating new jobs. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment, my hon. Friend the Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier). I almost said the so-called Minister for small firms. I am sure that my hon. Friend would be proud of that title, because for four years he has beavered away and has created an outstanding success story. The whole country is in his debt because he has striven for and obtained a better deal for the entrepreneur. That has not been easy, because it is difficult to break through the barriers of understanding confronting the person seeking to start off a business. That person sees before him the enormous challenge of getting his product to the market place, but he is also bewildered by the vast range of restrictions which

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seemingly confront him, not least that of raising money and finding somewhere to locate his business. Those matters are substantial Eigers to climb, yet the Minister has played a major part in easing some of the difficulties which small businesses have hitherto had to face but which now perhaps are easier to overcome.

Many of our opponents denigrate the small business and laugh it off as the ice cream and candy floss part of our business sector. That is nothing less then an insult because it denigrates what may become a large business in the not-too-distant future.

In the west midlands we face criticism in the tourism sector. Tourism is a bastion of the small business, bearing in mind the number of guest houses, small hotels, small coaching companies, taxis, restaurants, pizza parlour and beefburger joints, as the Americans call them, that have been created as a result of the leisure and tourism sectors. It does not matter whether it be Alton Towers, which started as a small business and has become a large one, or the Severn Valley railway, which operates successfully between Bridgnorth and Kidderminster and employs a substantial number of young people on the community work schemes as well as having a hard core of permanent people. That railway did not exist 15 or 20 years ago when the late Sir Gerald Nabarro, as chairman, bought a few miles of derelict track to open one of the first standard gauge preserved lines. That is now an outstanding success in terms of tourism potential, yet it started off in a small way. Who did not say, "Well they are a lot of nutcases who are interested in chuff-chuffs; let them get on with it; it is irrelevant to our present economy"? The people involved with that railway have taken risks and bought more miles of surplus British Rail track and they now have a link with the main line at Kidderminster. That risk has been translated into a successful and thriving preservation society, with all that it means for the economies of Bridgnorth, Bewdley, Kidderminster and many of the little villages along the route of that line.

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): What about Arley?

Mr. King: The hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) knows the area well and I believe that he is returning there shortly. If he returns as a tourist he will be able to sample the delights of travelling along that line and seeing the jobs that have been created as a result of people taking risks when everybody else thought that it was a silly thing to do.

There have been spin-offs from that venture. We have a vintage car museum in Bridgnorth. That is a delightful town which is now open to the tourist potential that that railway has brought.

Mr. Cash: While my hon. Friend is describing the delights and the tremendous tourist potential of the west midlands, I hope that he will bear in mind that we are taking strong initiatives to develop tourism in Stafford with its ancient high house, the castle, its association with Izaak Walton, who was the greatest angler of all time and many other attractions. My hon. Friend may also wish to bear in mind Ironbridge. I am on the board of Ironbridge, which has recently been awarded the world heritage award, which is one of the most prestigious awards that can be given in the tourist sector. While we are dealing with the west midlands, we should bear in mind the importance of the Heart of England tourist board and pay tribute to Roger Carter and the others who have helped so much with regard to the Severn Valley railway company, Alton Towers and all the other matters that my hon. Friend has mentioned.

Mr. King: My hon. Friend is right and has made a number of interesting points. His reference to Ironbridge is particularly relevant to me because as a small business man I operated in that area of Shropshire for a number of years and I became a part-time assistant — unpaid, I should add — in the squatter's cottage on the Blist hill site. In the very cold winters, we had a roaring fire going and people used to come from all over the world. I was promoted to the Mission church, which is a little tin shed, a traditional Mission church, where people used to come and expect me to deliver the sermon. On one occasion I was tempted to do just that, but it was part and parcel of a development in tourism which was self-funded. The state did not provide any money; it has been resourced by a number of grants from British industry.

Ironbridge, which is a little off the beaten track with no motorway going through it, has a large number of cafes, shops, restaurants, public houses and so on, which have sprung up as a result of the attraction that that museum is giving the area. All of those are small businesses.

Mr. Cash: The Minister of State came to Ironbridge to put up the plaque for the world heritage award and announced a £3 million endowment for Ironbridge. It might be helpful to get on the record the fact that the Government are being extremely helpful to Ironbridge.

Mr. King: I was not aware of that, but in the early days there were some difficulties, which happily have been resolved, and it is now a thriving and dynamic area. Hon. Members should pay homage to the cradle of the industrial revolution.

I must take up the point that my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) made that Stafford is in the forefront of attracting tourists to its area. Birmingham and the west midlands are doing exactly the same. We have a tremendous amount to offer the tourist and we are going about it in a businesslike manner. It may interest the House to know that I was recently in Singapore and looking at, among other things, its tourism potential. There are parallels between Singapore, Birmingham and the west midlands in that neither area immediately leaps to mind as being a tourist trap. Both have a reputation of being industrial areas where one goes to do business, but not to spend time as a tourist. In Singapore, it has been calculated that if it could get the average businessman to stay one extra day, it could almost double its tourist economy with a great deal more hotel occupancy than it has had hitherto. The way that is is attracting new businesses and tourist potential by recourse to the private sector and the entrepreneur lends lessons, if we need to learn that much, to similar areas of our country which are taking the first substantial but hesitant steps along the tourist trail.

My hon. Friend the Minister will know that our hon. Friend the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) is chairman of the Conservative back-bench tourism committee, and he does superb work in that sector. I have the honour of being one of its joint secretaries. What the Minister may not know is that my hon. Friend the Member for Yardley is contesting his seat at the election with the chairman of the West Midlands enterprise board, which is an august body that has sought to invest in local industry and has done much successful work. However, we take exception to that gentleman when he says that tourism is an ice cream and candy floss industry which has little relevance to Birmingham and the west midlands. We deplore that attitude because tourism is relevant and will result in a substantial number of new jobs.

We deplore the fact that someone in that position says that the National Exhibition Centre and the proposed convention centre in Birmingham, which is being built, will not mean much to the area's economy. I assure the House that people in my constituency are seeking actively to capitalise on the opportunities that the convention centre will bring, with minibus tours throughout the area, small hotels and other accommodation and retail outlets. These will be needed to satisfy the demands of the substantial number of people who will come from all over the world to what will be the largest convention centre in this country. That centre will have all the benefits of being located in the centre of Britain's second city.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Do not such people show a lamentable understanding of history? In the middle ages, a substantial number of the most influential and important towns in Europe were based almost entirely on the tourist trade, although they were then, on the whole, called pilgrimages. All sorts of substantial economies whose prosperity has continued were founded on a tourist trade.

Mr. King: My hon. Friend has raised an interesting point which I had not addressed. He is right. Of course, people on pilgrimages and people wandering various parts of the country were basically tourists. That is an extremely relevant point.

The creation of new businesses, whether in tourism or elsewhere, has been going on apace in America. In the eight years to 1976, two thirds of all jobs created in America were created by companies with 20 or fewer employees. One can see how the Americans do it. There are rows of car washes where one can get one's car hand washed. One no longer has to run the risk of having the car scored by automatic car washers. These days, automatic car washers do a sophisticated job, but a good hand car wash and leather-off afterwards cannot be beaten. I do not care what anyone says; the constant use of a powered car wash will damage a car's paintwork over a period, but it is another case for a hand-washed car. That is the way to wash a car, but one cannot easily get one's car hand washed in Birmingham for love nor money, and I doubt very much whether it can be done in London either. In most American cities the customer is almost spoilt for choice. That job is very labour intensive and lends itself to the activities of a small entrepreneur.

The small entrepreneur has the problem of finding a location and obtaining the necessary permission from the local council. He must apply to the local water authority to ensure that the right sort of sediment traps and filters are used before the water drains into the sewerage system. It is right that that should be done, but it all adds to the costs and the problems associated with establishing a labour-intensive business. I know from speaking to people who run manual car washes in this country that they have difficulties in holding on to labour. I was told that, in the black country, a person would work for 12 to 18 months before moving on. A similar exercise was tried in London, but people stayed in the job only two or three days before deciding that the work was too arduous.

About 1·4 million new businesses are now created in America each year compared with only about 90,000 a year in 1950. America has considerable experience in creating and developing new businesses. We are beginning to realise our investment because of the work that we have done in the past few years. We still have not tapped a great resource among people—the wish to get up and do their own thing. I hope that our policies will continue under the next Government to develop much of the ground work already done by my hon. Friend the Minister and his colleagues.

I was impressed by the leaflet on small businesses "The Success Story", which was prepared by the Department of Employment and which explains what the Government have been able to achieve and what that has meant. It identifies a number of the problems that the small business man faces.

Mr. Trippier: On a technicality, it is important that I make it clear that the leaflet was prepared not by my Department but by Conservative Central Office.

Mr. King: I am grateful for that correction. I should have looked at the small print at the bottom. The leaflet informs us of the problems that the small business man has faced which the Government have tackled successfully. Taxation has been one way of tackling those problems. Taxation changes mean that those starting small businesses will be adequately rewarded for the risk if they are successful. Of course, many are not, but a large number are. That is our fundamental belief. If the opportunity presents itself to get into a high income bracket and to retain much of one's income, it is worth aiming for and achieving. But that is less likely to happen if the Government take 98 per cent. of one's income. We have created the desire to take a chance to accumulate wealth for small business men, their families and employees.

Obviously, we need to reduce the burden of regulations facing the small business man. The Government have been keen to address their mind to that. They have ensured that planning authorities have been urged to help small businesses. Simpler and more flexible building regulations have come into force in England and Wales. Employment protection legislation affecting small businesses has been eased. A small business expands and takes on people. It is important to be able to release people from employment at relatively short notice and at little cost. If a small business is shackled to making substantial redundancy payments, development is hindered. Small businesses go up and down, up and down in their development cycle. They need to shed labour, take on labour, shed labour, and so on, and there is nothing wrong in that. Of course, it is unfortunate that many people are in the difficult position of being in work one day, and out the next, but they should be secure in the knowledge that other small businesses are taking on labour.

I am pleased to note that the Government have taken steps to establish an entrepreneurial outlook in our education system. We must step up our activities. A number of years ago, I talked to a class of about 30 16-year-olds on the subject of starting up one's own business. I asked, "What is the one thing that one needs

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to start a small business?" All the students, save one, said, "You need money." To a certain degree, one does need money. But one person said, "You need an idea." We need to stimulate that sort of outlook. We need to broaden people's horizons and make them aware that there are limitless opportunities in the education system and that, once people have completed their education, they can go out in the world and take up the challenges and opportunities of creating their own businesses. Only if people have that attitude—in far too many places our education system is not engendering it—can we hope to create the entrepreneurial society and jobs that we desperately need.

Mr. Graham Bright (Luton, South): I am pleased that my hon. Friend has come to this point. Does he agree that the most important requirement if a person is to run a successful small business is that he should have the training to do so? This usually means a broad-based education. The one thing that a small business man has to do and large business man does not is to be an expert in every activity. Does my hon. Friend agree that that is probably the most important thing needed if small businesses are to succeed? Anyone can start a business, but it is a different matter to make it succeed.

Mr. King: I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, South (Mr. Bright) that it is essential that our education system furnishes aspiring entrepreneurs with the basic qualifications to make decisions and understand the workings of the industrial and manufacturing business sectors.

Nothing concentrates the mind like the commitment that one must put into an enterprise. No matter how much education people receive, it is sometimes difficult for some to understand the relevance of a cash flow chart and production manufacturing methods. Such knowledge comes from knife and fork experience. It is not easy to educate young people to understand these things, and much more can be done. I am aware that, in many schools, business studies takes on the form of creating a business within the school environment. Such schools exist in Birmingham, and I am sure that there are more elsewhere in the country. I commend those schools, but we must step up our efforts to extend that practice.

Although some youngsters may not readily appear to be the sort of material capable of running their own businesses, those who have difficulty mastering the three Rs, they should not be written off, because nothing succeeds like experience. Although when some youngsters leave school they may not be ready to start their own business, within a few years, having undertaken a YTS and the opportunities of training, they may eventually move on to start up their own business. They will remember that, at school, they were taught to have broader horizons than the present narrower ones that pupils all too often receive.

After a meeting I had had in a youth club in my constituency the youth officer asked me to meet some of my constituents. I went into the side room of the club and met eight youngsters. I introduced myself and asked them how old they were. They were 16 and were about to leave school. I asked how many of them had got jobs. One of the youngsters put up his hand and said that he had an apprenticeship. I said that I could not believe that the rest of them had not got jobs and the others replied, "We are on YTS, you know, slave labour." I am sure that most of us remember that when we left school many of us took up jobs at slave labour rates. I remember taking up an apprenticeship in the motor industry and the pay was absurd. Indeed, before I started previous apprentices had paid the company for the privelege of receiving training.

I asked the youngsters who were to start on the YTS what training they were to receive. One said that he was to be trained as a brickie and another said that he was to be trained as a plumber. I said that they should consider the training that they will receive not as slave labour or as a dead-end job. I said that they should try to become the best brickie or the best plumber in the area. I told them that they should keep their eyes open and their ears to the ground and that once they had trained themselves to become the best they should consider starting up on their own as a self-employed brickie or plumber. Indeed bricklayers are much in demand. I told them that they should aim higher instead of believing that after YTS they were washed up and finished. That is not the case. The YTS furnishes people with ability and enables them to go out into the market place to use those skills working for someone or perhaps working for themselves.

The efforts that the Government have made to make young people more aware of the challenges of small business and widening their horizons at school is essential if we are to continue to create the number of new businesses that are currently being established.

Earlier I mentioned that I, too, was a small business man. I remember, way back in October 1974, starting a business manufacturing alloy road wheels. I had had some experience because, prior to that I had been selling the same type of product for another company. I realised that there was a gap in the market place. That is the key to success, one must have an idea on where one's product will go. I had identified a gap in the market place and together with two other colleagues I started up a small business. If one has an idea starting up in business is not difficult. I had the necessary capital from a house that I could sell—I had bought it on anticipation of getting married, but I had not done so — and my two colleagues already ran a small business and had the necessary investment stake to put into the business.

The problems occur for small businesses perhaps 12 months or two years later. By that time the business has established its product in the market place. The small business man's hunch has been correct, but the demand for the product is so great that he is facing an increasing order book, but a lack of capacity to meet those orders. Suppliers are rather reluctant to continue to extend credit because they do not want to suddenly find themselves with an insolvent company and to lose their money.

Our company experienced similar difficulties, but we got round it by introducing new money into the business. That money came from my family and from the existing business run by my colleagues. We got over that obstacle, but many people fall at that first hurdle when developing their business from the knife and fork stage into something more sophisticated.

In those days, 1974-76, it was difficult to find new premises for businesses to develop. We were based in Warwick and there was nowhere between the areas of Coventry, Birmingham, Walsall and Wolverhampton in which to develop. That seems incredible now. The only space that we could find was on the second and third floors of a derelict industrial unit. Indeed, that is one of the problems faced in many inner-city areas. Because of the constraints on land space many factories have been built on the vertical rather than on the flat. It is no good passing products up and down a factory using a lift because it is inadequate and causes bottle necks in production. Factories need to spread out, but many of the factories built in the pre-war and immediate post-war period were built on the vertical. However, such buildings soon lay derelict, ready to be knocked down while the manufacturing industries moved away to one-storey buildings.

I did not want to be located on the second and third floors of a factory block in the middle of Birmingham so we moved to Telford new town. There was an adequate supply of factory premises on one level. One of the other advantages of moving to that area was that we were able to introduce more capital into the business.

I mentioned previously that, to start the business, I had sold my house and as a result I had been living with my parents. When we moved the firm to Telford I had nowhere to live and I certainly could not commute from Birmingham. However, in Telford there was plenty of good rented accommodation and my accommodation was very close to my factory. As a small businessman I found myself working all hours. It was not unusual to load up a lorry coming in from Holland at midnight to enable that lorry to get down to the docks first thing in the morning for shipment across to Europe. We were able to undertake such work because we lived virtually next door to the factory. Certainly, if the factory had been located in the centre of Birmingham or London it would have been extremely socially inconvenient to commute for 40 miles to carry out such loading, especially at about midnight. However, Telford offered marvellous opportunities for the business man located close to his factory. It offered a short commuting distance between one's place of work and rest.

We should build upon the opportunities that are available in such places as Telford. When one looks around one can readily identify the problems in the south-east. There are constraints upon development because of land space and property values are high. A modest detached house in the south-east may be worth £100,000 —in the centre of London it may be worth a good deal more. That modest detached house, perhaps bought seven years ago, has probably made a capital gain of £50,000.

There are wonderful opportunities for the entrepreneur in the south-east to up sticks and move to the midlands, the north-east or the north-west. He can go there clutching £50,000 to put into a small business. Of course he must have somewhere to live, but the property that cost him £100,000 in the south-east would cost him only £45,000 in my constituency. If we offered decent rented accommodation to the entrepreneur, he could go to the midlands with a substantial sum to introduce into his business. If he has a friendly bank and a partner in a similar position to himself, there is no reason why he should not be able to put £100,000 into the business plus another £100,000 by way of an overdraft. Such pound-for-pound arrangements are not unusual.

It is a good idea for entrepreneurs in the south-east to give up the congestion and overcrowding, to sell up and go to the midlands—to Birmingham in particular where their capital appreciation would go a long way to realising their dreams of having a business. Life in Birmingham is pretty good. We might criticise the Labour authority there, but it is defined as Right-wing and recognises business opportunities, although some of its high rating policies make one wonder how important they consider businesses.

The countryside in the area is wonderful. The city is open with leafy-laned housing estates and a symphony orchestra. Birmingham is not that big that it is impossible to get to know us well. We have an opportunity to attract the entrepreneur who is anxious to start his own business. The entrepreneur from the south-east can widen his horizons by moving north.

Some small business development estates could do with a major refit. There is no reason why industrial units should not have living accommodation built in. Why do starter factories not have living accommodation so that a family can live alongside the business? That happens in the garage industry, in pubs and the retail trade. Why should it not occur in the manufacturing sector? Why, historically, must people live up to 40 miles from their place of work? If we brought together work and living we could realise far more the resources and abilities of the young would-be entrepreneur. I am sure that we can do more for the small business man and I am confident that the next Conservative Government will build on all that has been achieved.

Nursery factory units with living accommodation could be one way forward, as could professional on-site assistance. In privately developed manufacturing estates it would be a good idea to house an on-site accountant and secretarial facilities. Initial assistance with typed letters, simple accounting and advice would be welcome to those starting up in business.

The retail sector is important. We have enterprise zones throughout the country. After a shaky start some are proving outstandingly successful. The Telford enterprise zone is successful and the Dudley enterprise zone is coming on well, albeit on a retail platform which was not originally envisaged. Vast numbers of jobs and opportunities are being provided.

Why cannot we establish enterprise shopping areas in the cities? Most cities have run down areas which could be turned into enterprise shopping areas where small businesses can thrive.

Mr. Jack Dormand (Easington): The hon. Gentleman has made some sensible suggestions, but who is to provide the money? The Minister is a devotee of private entérprise. That is the Conservative's philosophy, but it is also the kind of policy for which the Labour party argues. I should have thought that the system itself, according to the hon. Gentleman's philosophy, would provide the opportunity and the money.

Mr. King: Building living accommodation into nursery units is a matter for private developers. Perhaps such a scheme has not occurred to them, or perhaps there is some reason why it cannot be done. No Government diktat is needed. The Government do not need to say, "Thou shalt build living accommodation onto industrial units over 2,000 sq ft." Private developers, of which there are many in the west midlands, should examine ways of providing on-site assistance. We already have a type of enterprise zone and I see no difficulty, perhaps through inner city partnerships, about developing enterprise shopping areas.

The hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) asked where the money would come from. There is a move towards hypermarket developments outside city centres.

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Authorities could consent to planning permission on the understanding that the hypermarkets pay a levy to subsidise a small enterprise shopping area in the city centre. The hypermarket would help subsidise the small business which in some cases has to close because it cannot compete with the hypermarket. We have to get the balance right and adjusting the fiscal problems would be a step in the right direction. Our Asian and West Indian friends would be delighted to open more small businesses in cities but they are deferred by high rates. Government reforms in relation to the community charge and the national rating charge will encourage small businesses.

I am worried about our insolvency rules, particularly as they affect directors' responsibility. In my experience there are times when a small embryonic business is technically insolvent. A business can come unstuck if an accountant says that the business is insolvent at one particular time. He will say, "You took a risk, so you're for the high jump." That does not encourage the entrepreneur to take the risks necessary to put his tiny embryonic enterprise on to the bottom league of business. We should extend more benevolence to directors who fall foul of the insolvency laws. They should not be strung up as an example.

Much comment is made about the late payment of bills. I fear legislation which will make all businesses pay bills within a certain time. Many a small business has to decide which bills to pay. The business man might want to keep his raw materials coming in so he will pay his supplier but not pay the carton supplier. A time limit will create cash flow problems for the small business as it seeks to break out of the straightjacket of bills and costs.

Product liability also causes concern. The technical resources for innovation so that a business can break into the market place are limited. Some costs of product liability, particlarly when one is exporting to overseas countries such as the United States, are substantial. I am not sure how one can get round the problems of being refused an insurance policy to cover one's product liability. That is one of the big hurdles that a small business faces. In my experience it was difficult to get hold of the sort of liability cover that we wanted when making wheels and seats. We might have given up if the market in the United States had not been such a good one to go for.

There is still the difficulty of the gap between those with ideas and those with money. We need to encourage further steps to bring the two sides together. I am tempted to suggest the idea of a small firms broker, who would have the job of introducing those with money to those with businesses. Perhaps the banks should play a greater role by taking initiatives and saying publicly that they are in the business of creating small businesses and want to go hell for leather to that end. They must have special departments for that, and people to make the introductions on a friendly basis, rather than merely doling out money for cash-flow forecasts, and the nice talk of promoters, in some cases only to find that there are problems later on.

I also want to pay tribute to the work of Peat Marwick McLintock in the Midland areas, which has come out with a "Businessman's Guide to Grants and Incentives in the Midlands". It is an excellent booklet, which illustrates the plethora of opportunities for assistance and grants that is available for small businesses in the midlands. That, too, goes a long way to helping small businesses develop.

All too often we hear of those who are not able to offer the security that is necessary for those who wish to lend money. A good idea can fall as a result of not obtaining the necessary funding. I wonder whether a special scheme could be introduced in inner city partnership areas under which the Government would allocate a small amount of risk capital for new business start-ups. That could work within the existing ICP scheme; perhaps a small firms board could be created within that scheme for the inner city areas. Such help would probably only be available after the first year of a new business's operations. Initially, people would be on their own, starting, say, a welding or accident repair business. I mention the inner city because many of our West Indian friends find it particularly hard to start a business. Perhaps, ultimately, those people hold the key to our inner city rejuvenation. I do not like the thought of zeroing in on a particular minority to give the people who comprise it special help that is not available to others—it should be available to everyone. However, in our inner city areas there are still opportunities for West Indians and Asians to create their own business—a far more difficult proposition than it is for the indigenous population.

The Government have a record of which they can be proud. One looks in vain for the ideas of other parties. One finds them wanting, if they are mentioned at all. We have made several significant steps over the past few years. I am sure that we shall make many more over the next five years, and progress should be maintained. Within the small business sector lies the hope and salvation of many of our people and great cities—small businesses with the skills that are necessary to drive us forward towards the latter part of the century into a post-industrial society, but nevetheless, a business-oriented society. I am convinced that the next Conservative Government will rise to the challenge.

11.34 am

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): I have listened for nearly an hour to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) and have enjoyed at least some parts of his speech. On occasion, he was somewhat too party political and euphoric, because nobody in his right mind wants to discourage small businesses, which are the wealth of the nation and from which big businesses grow. My party and, I am sure, the Labour party want to encourage small businesses.

The hon. Member for Northfield had a tilt at the Labour party in the early part of his speech, saying that when the Labour party was in office it took no notice of small businesses. That is not true. Mr. Bob Cryer was a good Minister for small businesses. At the time of the Lib-Lab pact we persuaded the Prime Minister to make Lord Lever the Minister responsible in the Cabinet for small businesses. So efforts were made. It was not easy, because the country had been in a financial crisis.

I had a rant on this subject, as the Minister well knows, only three or four weeks ago. I do not want to bore him or the House by repeating myself. I have been involved with small businesses during the past 10 to 12 years, and I have tried to build up a few of them. I own a china shop and my wife has a bookshop. I own premises that I lease out to a man who makes furniture and to a person who makes double glazing. I have a bakery which my son helps to run; it has been bankrupt twice, but it is now making money. I also have tenants involved with hairdressing and children's clothes. I also try to sell Isle of Wight products, which is the biggest mistake that I ever made. I try to sell Isle of Wight wine and biscuits, but nobody seems to want to buy them.

I speak as one who has borrowed freely from banks over the years. High interest rates still prevail. I know that they have come down, but far too often they still cripple small businesses. Inflation is levelling off at 4 per cent. and may fall slightly, but interest rates are still extremely high. Anything that we can do to get interest rates down will help small businesses more than anything else.

I shall have a go at the banks. I am grateful to them for helping me, but they seem to clap on all sorts of charges. I recently found another one on my bank statement a security charge for holding deeds of £9 or £10. That idea comes from the Americans. The banks charge arrangement fees and about 50p every time that we cash a cheque. Given that the National Westminster Bank has just made profits of more than £1 billion, the banks could be more helpful than they are.

I want to talk about the role of the Development Commission, and I know that the Minister will share my views on this. I pay tribute to the Minister, who has done a good job in the time that he has been in charge of small businesses. He has achieved a great deal. At one time, the Development Commission was under threat from the Government, but fortunately it survived and has an enormous role to play in rural areas such as my constituency. It has done much for us int the way of building nursery units, and it has recently spent just under £1 million on converting a boat yard into units in Cowes, which I hope will be let. However, the problem is that the commission's wings may well be clipped in future, and if we must look only to the private sector for the provision of such facilities, that simply cannot be done in the Isle of Wight, the west of England or in many other parts of the country. The private sector will not receive the return that it requires from the lettings—about £5 per foot in a constituency such as mine. The maximum will be about £2·50, which is not a feasible proposition for the private sector.

When seeking outside developers to build factory units, possibly for a small high-tech park, which is what my development board has in mind, the only way to do that is to allow them to build 100,000 sq ft of retail warehousing. That is crippling to the in-town retailers, but outside contractors require that incentive. There has been some glee on the Conservative Benches about the fact that we have just lost control of Medina borough council, but that was due not so much to a swing to the Conservative party but to the problems of planning and the question whether the island should have another Tesco superstore, which will go to Newport now. Consequently, we retained all the seats in Newport and lost them all in Ryde. Ryde thinks that it will lose out because the superstore is going to Newport. Now we are trying to build some factory units just outside Ryde, and the only way to do that is by putting up another 100,000 sq ft building of the B & Q superstore type. That will cripple the town centres. Planning decisions should not be taken under pressure of that kind.

The Development Commission is the body to which we must continue to look to supply the factory units that we need and that are rapidly taken up. They are subsidised, and I believe that that subsidy must be met by central funds.

I criticise the Development Commission to some extent because it is a little bureaucratic, through the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, its subsidiary. It is occasionally probably too slow in reaching decisions. Sometimes it is very slow in bringing in accountancy advice. Apart from that, I have nothing but praise for the commission and its chairman. We owe it a great deal in my part of the world, as is the case elsewhere, I am sure.

The local authority can also play a vital role. I am a great believer in local government. It has had one hell of a time over the past few years with central Government withdrawing funds. Nevertheless, the local authority is always the body to which the smaller or bigger firm comes when it needs help. The hon. Member for Northfield talked about tourism. I could not agree with him more. About 8 million people visit the Isle of Wight every year, which is far more than the number of people who visit the Channel Islands. It is a bit below Devon and Blackpool. If the local authority is interested in encouraging tourism, it can do so by providing small amounts of funds and helping in other ways such as the provision of facilities. That is desperately needed because tourism has had a rough ride since 1979.

This year we had the special Olympics in the Isle of Wight. A great deal of work was done by the local authority. Sponsorship was given and some of the people who visited us from all parts of Europe and England were privately accommodated on the island. Nevertheless, the county council did most of the spadework. A little later this year we shall have a festival of the arts. I am staggered that it has come off. When it was suggested by a PR consultant who works in the House, I poured cold water on the idea. I thought that we would lose a lot of money. We lost money on a song contest. I did not think that the festival would get off the ground. In fact, it has, and I am pleased to say that the Minister for the Arts, if he is still in office, will visit us. Sadler's Wells ballet, symphony orchestras, and so on are coming. It is amazing. The sponsorship has also surprised me. It has taken us a year and a half to build up the festival, but it will last for three to four weeks. We are using the grounds of Osborne house for the ballet and other events.

That would not have started if the present leader of the county council had not said, "We'll put £20,000 into the kitty so that Mr. Kevin West can be appointed to organise the festival." Mr. West has been extremely successful as the organiser, but basically the process started with the local authority. That is why I come back to the role that the local authority has and must continue to play. It is well known that the Minister is a great supporter of enterprise agencies. We established our enterprise agency through the local authority, although most of the money came from other sources. Through the local authority we have moved up a step to the development board, which is chaired by our former lord lieutenant.

I should like to make one plea to the Minister. We have kept our enterprise agency going because, through his efforts, he has persuaded the Chancellor of the Exchequer to encourage enterprise agencies by putting aside money that can be given to them if other funding comes from local sources. It doubled the amount. That was a good idea. It was floated for some time, and it has now come to fruition.

[Mr. Stephen Ross]

I should like to put this point to the Minister's boss, the Secretary of State for Employment, who was on the island recently. He should see whether the scheme can be made more flexible. We should like to merge our enterprise agency with our development board, but we cannot do it because we need the extra cash. That is why we shall hang on. I accept that there are some development boards that the Government suspect are not run on the lines that they would like. It is only right that the structure should be investigated, but if it comes up trumps I ask the Secretary of State to be a little more flexible. It would help us, and I believe that it would help others.

The development board has managed to bring together all political views. It has managed to get the three authorities on the island to agree on how we should proceed. It is doing very good work. I pay tribute to Sir John Nicholson, who has moved into areas in which I could not have operated. He does not mess about going through junior bank managers. He rings up the chairman himself and things begin to move. That is his ability.

The boards and enterprise agencies are there to help occassionally with finance. The hon. Member for Northfield talked about some sort of Government funding, perhaps at subsidised rates of interest. We on the Liberal Benches have promoted that idea for a long time. It will be in our manifesto, and is highly desirable. When I was leader of the county council, we had a budget of about £150,000. We were able to lend to small firms that had a bit of crisis, perhaps over a machine, and could not get the money from the bank. They were stretched too far. Small firms might have had a problem with marketing, so they received help with publicity. They were helped with all sorts of things, such as stands at shows on the mainland, and even in Germany and other countries. Those are areas where a little money can help enormously. It is not always forthcoming from banks—not by a long shot. I used to always ring up the bank managers, to find out why a firm was not being helped. We always had it double checked by the treasurer. We used to proceed through the enterprise agency. Such matters are now dealt with directly by the development board. I cannot remember one instance when we fell down. On the whole, that little stimulus helped enormously.

The role of accountants is vital. As the hon. Member for Northfield said, it is in the second or third year that one gets into difficulty. He mentioned Peat Marwick McLintock. Accountants should do a little more, if possible—even the local firms—to help small businesses, perhaps by not charging too big a fee to start with. They should keep a watchful eye on small businesses because things tend to go over the top. They get excited, orders come in, they can overstretch themselves and then they are in difficulty. The accountants can keep them on the strait and narrow. Such things can happen—for example, in the bakery to which I referred.

I should like to fly my kite, in that I am a great believer in the elected mayoral system. Birmingham should have a chief who is directly elected and who can make decisions. Incidentally, it would take one hell of a load off the backs of Members of Parliament. We would not be involved in matters that should rightly be subject to local decision. We would be able to do the work that we wanted to get on with. We are constantly being called to write to the local authorities or make pleas on behalf of constituents on matters that should not be our concern. I believe that the leaders should be well paid and should have a team—of professional advisers. The Government would then have to listen when the mayor of Birmingham arrived. I should like the Lord Mayor of London to be a real Lord Mayor. I should have liked to be elected the mayor of the Isle of Wight. Then I could have done things that I have not been able to do in my 13 years in the House. But I have not managed to get that into our manifesto. I nearly won that battle, but not quite.

I agree with what the hon. Member for Northfield said about the problems of late payment. That matter has been discussed much in this Parliament. Surely the problem is that the big firms do not pay the small firms promptly. That happens on too many occasions, and sub-contractors suffer enormously when their bills are paid late. It could work the other way, and the hon. Gentleman is right to point that out.

We would like national insurance contributions to be cut by about 25 per cent. in assisted areas and unemployment black spots. That would help small businesses.

I do not agree with assisted areas, and I believe that the Secretary of State does not either. We should help small firms, wherever they are. If someone has a good idea, I say, for goodness sake, help to get that bloke off the ground. This country cannot afford to lose such people. People still have bright, fantastic ideas. Japanese products seem to be based on ideas that started here, although I agree that the Japanese are now giving some back to us. People come to my office with all sorts of amazing ideas recently even a cat trap. I must say that I did not see a future for that!

Those people should be helped, not necessarily just in assisted areas. I have bleated about that many times. Unemployment is at about 17 per cent. in the Isle of Wight and is more than that in winter. One feels bitter when one loses a firm to an assisted area. We have lost one or two, notably Desmond Norman. I feel strongly about all these matters.

Many niggling factors do not help small firms. I have great battles with our county surveyor because he tends to go around putting double yellow lines everywhere, often unnecessarily. It can hurt a small business, if, when it has just got going, suddenly yellow lines are painted along its road. People cannot park outside, so they tend to go elsewhere. Road repairs and unnecessary closures are another problem. We have had roads closed for weeks on end, and that can be damaging for a business's cash flow. Valuation officers should deal more quickly with rating reviews. Often they take a year and will not give an inch, even if a road has been closed for some weeks, or a redevelopment is going on opposite and affecting business.

There is too much fussiness about bill boards. Small firms up back alleyways or in secondary trading positions, and suffering as a result, want to make themselves known. They put up decently decorated boards and the surveyors' department comes along and takes them away. It tells greengrocers that they are coming out on the pavement too much and should move back. Two greengrocers opened on the Broadway in Totland bay and they were served with such a notice. However, anyone who would open a greengrocers there in the middle of winter deserves a medal, because there is virtually nobody to serve. The department is crackers to behave like that. Such niggling factors tend to come from authorities run by people who have never had their own business and know nothing of such problems as a weekly letter from the bank manager.

One major factor has risen recently about which I had no knowledge, although perhaps I should have realised what was going on. It results from the sort of regulations that we often pass in the House without debate. We recently passed one concerning the carrying of chemicals on roads and ferries, and quite rightly because many dangerous chemicals are being carried in this way but have not been declared.

However, many chemicals are desperately needed by firms in my constituency such as Plessey Truecast—a firm that the hon. Member for Northfield will know—which makes castings for the motor trade and racing cars, and paint makers, all of which are finding that the chemicals cannot come on the ferries because all the ferries take both passengers and lorries; there are no goods-only ferries. There is some dispensation when there are only 25 passengers on board, but ferries will almost always carry more than 25 passengers.

All this will cause problems and add to the firms' overheads. I have met with the Minister with responsibility for shipping, who happens to have a house on the island and so is aware of the problem, which is not an easy one to overcome. The cost of the Solent crossing is always a complaint, because it can add hundreds of pounds to a firm's costs, and there will now be the additional problems over these essential chemicals. Even the water authority is having trouble. I am not sure how we shall get over this difficult problem.

The House never debated the regulations, but perhaps it should have done and insisted on some dispensation for a longer period. I know that, as a result of the Zeebrugge disaster, the problem of carrying chemicals is in everybody's mind and it is right that something should be done about it. However, the result has been another problem for small businesses in my constituency, some of which will move if the problem cannot be solved. Having gone through the traumas with Westland, Plessey and the recent Williams bid for Temperature, which is a company employing nearly 300 people in my constituency and having survived all those, we are now coming up against the problem of the chemicals. It is a good job that I am leaving the House, because I do not think that I could take very much more of this.

Finally, we want greater loyalty about buying British goods. I wish to goodness that people were a bit more loyal to their country. When I opened my business selling china, I determined that I would sell only British and Irish porcelain and glass, so I sell Wedgwood, Coalport, Waterford glass and so on. A salesman came in the other day and asked us to purchase some Czechoslovak glass and my manageress said, "Oh no, we sell only British Glass." He looked at some Caithness glass and said, "Well, that was made in France anyway." I checked with Lord MacKay, who was chairman of Caithness glass at the time, and asked whether the company got any glass from France. He said, "Of course we do. It is much cheaper. Then we inscribe it." One cannot win. We should try to encourage greater loyalty to buying British and buying locally. Perhaps we could persuade the public to do a bit more of that.

I am grateful to the House for putting up with me and for listening to this rant, and I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to make my last speech to the House.

Royal Assent

Mr. Speaker: I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified Her Royal Assent to the following Acts:

1. Finance Act 1987.
2. Appropriation Act 1987.
3. Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987.
4. Billiards (Abolition of Restrictions) Act 1987.
5. Chevening Estate Act 1987.
6. Pilotage Act 1987.
7. Banking Act 1987.
8. Register of Sasines Act 1987.
9. Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987.
10. Crown Proceedings (Armed Forces) Act 1987.
11. Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.
12. Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987.
13. Deer Act 1987.
14. Agricultural Training Board Act 1987.
15. Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1987.
16. Landlord and Tenant Act 1987.
17. Crossbows Act 1987.
18. AIDS (Control) Act 1987.
19. Motor Cycle Noise Act 1987.
20. Protection of Animals (Penalties) Act 1987.
21. Prescription (Scotland) Act 1987.
22. Access to Personal Files Act 1987.
23. Criminal Justice Act 1987.
24. Parliamentary and Health Service Commissioners Act 1987.
25. Registered Establishments (Scotland) Act 1987.
26. Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1987.
27. Family Law Reform Act 1987.
28. Consumer Protection Act 1987.
29. Local Government Act 1987.
30. Parliamentary and other Pensions Act 1987.
31. Diplomatic and Consular Premises Act 1987.
32. Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987.
33. Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Act 1987.
34. Territorial Sea Act 1987.
35. Pontypridd Markets Fairs and Town Hall Act 1987.
36. British Railways (Stansted) Act 1987.
37. Aberystwyth Harbour Act 1987.
38. City of London (Various Powers) Act 1987.
39. Brighton Marine Palace and Pier (Finance, &c.) Act 1987.
40. London Underground (Goodge Street) Act 1987.
41. John Ernest Rolfe and Florence Iveen Rolfe (Marriage Enabling) Act 1987.
42. George Donald Evans and Deborah Jane Evans (Marriage Enabling) Act 1987.

Small Businesses

Question again proposed, That this House do now adjourn.

11.56 am

Mr. Graham Bright (Luton, South): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) on initiating this debate, which takes place in remarkable circumstances. A decade or so ago, the debate would have been about the decline of small businesses and the measures needed to reverse that decline. The situation today is very different. Those measures have already been taken and the debate takes place against a background of sustained growth in the small firms sector. There is no doubt about the scale and importance of that process. However one measures the figures, they are significantly better than they were eight or 10 years ago.

The average annual net increase in the number of firms registered for VAT since 1979 has been more than 27,000 and the number of self-employed people in both manufacturing and service industries has grown by more than 500,000. From those figures, produced by the Small Business Research Trust, it has been calculated that between 800,000 and 1·1 million new jobs have been created by small firms since 1980. That is an incredible figure and it entirely justifies the argument advanced by many of us here today, especially my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls), that the way to create jobs is through small businesses.

My hon. Friend the Member for Northfield spoke at some length about his business experience and the way in which he started his firm. I have always maintained that one advantage that small firms offer is flexibility. They also offer opportunities for innovation, and, because they are small and flexible, they can deliver on time. That was brought home to me when I began my business in 1970 — at the beginning of a Conservative Government, unlike my hon. Friend the Member for Northfield — having been made redundant from a large group of companies. The firm in question was part of the group and was, in effect, thrown out with me. I rapidly became aware that whereas in the past I had had to prepare papers and put arguments for any decision, which then had to go to the main board, a process which took days, weeks or even months, on my first day in command I could simply sit down at my desk and prepare a plan and a budget. As I ate my sandwich at lunch time, it occurred to me that that was it—in the afternoon I could simply get on with it and put my plans into action. That really illustrates the flexibility of a small company.

Of course, small companies can innovate very rapidly. My company is still very small, although it is much larger than it was, and we are able to have an idea in the morning and put it into action in the afternoon. Large firms now recognise that. Many large firms buy in goods from small firms and I can speak from experience. In my constituency Vauxhall, which has a massive record of obtaining materials and supplies from this country, is looking at small companies. It recognises that it will get delivery in time and that the quality will be constant. That is good.

The figures I have quoted are impressive. They are the result of the structural changes that the economy has been undergoing and the exciting range of measures that the Government have introduced. Criticism of the Government's record from the Opposition is rather ironic in the light of their record, particularly—I mention this to the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) who is alone on the Opposition Benches—the unholy alliance that took place in the 1970s. It was their policies on personal and capital taxation and on borrowing and lending that had to be reversed to bring the crisis for small firms to an end.

It is precisely because income tax has been reduced by 6p in the pound and because the thresholds have risen above the rate of inflation that the small business man has found it possible to prosper. That is what small businesses are all about. If they do not prosper, obviously they go out of business and it is not only the business man who loses his job but many others as well. It is so important that we provide the wherewithal for small firms to prosper.

Because the penal effects of capital transfer tax and capital gains tax have been removed, family businesses have been able to survive, and that is important. I have always argued that. People believe that there is something wrong with a family business. A family business is not just a business. It employs people and if the family, because of taxation, has to sell the company it is not just the family itself that loses out, but many other people as well.

Opposition Members tell us that they will reverse the policies on taxation that we have introduced if they win the general election. However, they also tell us—we have heard it this morning—that they are the friends of small businesses. One of the other may be true but they cannot both be true. The positive measures we have introduced over the past eight years such as the loan guarantee scheme, the business start-up scheme, the expansion scheme, venture capital scheme, enterprise allowance scheme and many more have had to overcome resistance both inside and outside the House. It is to the credit of my hon. Friend the Minister that he has had the courage to persevere and keep those schemes under way. The story is the same for enterprise loans, development corporations, freeports and so on. The defenders of restrictive practices, obsessive planning controls and rigid employment legislation are the enemies of small businesses. There is no doubt about that. That is why one often turns to the United States.

My hon. Friend the Member for Northfield spoke about what has happened in America and how small businesses have prospered because there is a different climate there. I always turn to America to see what it does. It has discovered some interesting facts. The American Government ensure that at least 30 per cent. of their spend goes to small companies. On research and development they found that as they went down the scale from enormous corporations to the medium-sized companies they were getting from the medium-sized companies about four times as many innovations per dollar spent. It is even more remarkable that the small companies, where there are a dozen or so chaps working on research, very often in high technology, were achieving 24 times as many innovations per dollar than the large corporations. That is something that not only the Government but big businesses are learning — that it is important and financialy beneficial to involve small companies.

I know that my constituents normally think of General Motors as being some enormous operation that covers the whole of America. That is not the case. The miracle of new jobs in America has resulted fom small businesses, just as it is beginning to occur here. Sixty-six per cent. of all new jobs in America have come from companies employing fewer than 20 people and, importantly, companies that are less than five years old. That points the way that we are beginning to go here.

It is the same in other places such as Canada, Germany and Japan. It is generally thought that one has to be a giant corporation such as Mitsubishi or Toyota to be successful in Japan. Although it may be a useless figure, it is interesting that every sixth Japanese worker is the president of his own company. That shows that Japan is not full of massive corporations. It has many small companies.

I will use the example of car manufacturing, as I come from Luton. The technique of delivery just in time is being developed in Japan because the large companies there do not make motor cars, they assemble them. Small businesses make the brake pipes, grommets and other bits and pieces.

Small firms are more flexible as they do not have the sort of labour problems that large firms have. They are able to deliver goods to the end of the production line. Six or seven companies may all make the same component and deliver them in small vans to the end of the line. Imagine the chaos that would be caused in this country if I turned up in my van and unloaded components at a major factory. The whole place would close down. However, that is how that part of the Japanese economy works, and we have to look at that.

One of the most significant steps we took was the capital allowance for the building of small units. It was first 2,500 sq. ft. and later 1,250 sq. ft. As my hon. Friend the Member for Northfield said, the one thing he could not find when he started his business was a place to start. It was impossible. In the 1970s, people used railway arches or battered, dirty old places that no one else wanted. Small businesses could find no where to start. However, in the country now, and certainly in my constituency, there are small units for nurseries or other businesses to start up in. The small units range from upwards of 400 sq. ft. This has enabled small businesses to become respectable. If a business man was working in a rat-infested place, he was not respectable. However, if he has a nice new developed place, he is respectable. We had to change the attitude that someone working for himself was not second rate. I am sorry to say that that attitude existed, but we have managed to put it on a new plain. The opportunity for small businessesmen to have new small units has inspired businesses.

Mr. Rowe: I suggest to my hon. Friend that one way of enhancing the respectability of the House might be to ensure that hon. Members have rather better premises from which to work.

Mr. Bright: I could not agree more with my hon. Friend. Although my small business has very meagre offices, they are like a palace compared with this place.

Sir Paul Hawkins (Norfolk, South-West): I am glad to say that the Services Committee has produced a plan for the entire area from Derby gate to Cannon row. The contract was let on 8 May, and I hope that my successor and my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, South (Mr. Bright) will soon have marvellous offices there. At least we shall be able to move more people from this building across the street and allow my hon. Friend to have a good office of his own.

[Sir Paul Hawkins]

My first Adjournment debate in the House dealt with the lack of facilities for Members of Parliament. I remember being told by a former Serjeant at Arms—the present one would never say such a thing—that I could not have a filing cabinet until I had been here for a year. After my Adjournment debate, a filing cabinet was issued to me, but it was placed in the Cloisters, which was then a gentlemen's cloakroom. I was told in no uncertain terms by the former Serjeant at Arms that my secretary could not go to the filing cabinet because it was in the gentlemen's cloakroom, even though it did not have a toilet or wash basin. My hon. Friend is much better off now.

Mr. Bright: We are going a little off the track, but I am sure that you will allow me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West (Sir P. Hawkins), who has worked hard to improve conditions in the House. I accept that they are much better than they were, but there is still a long way to go. Thanks to his work, we can look forward to much better facilities. It is a great pity that he will not be with us to enjoy them. If I get a new office, I shall think of my hon. Friend.

I was talking about new facilities for small firms. The Government also introduced the small firms counselling service. As I said when I intervened in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Northfield, it is all very well to start a business, but what does not happen is that, overnight, a fairy waves a magic wand and someone becomes an entrepreneur. A person may have a skill or some knowledge of the product that he is making, but to be a small business man he must also be a bit of an accountant, a marketing man, an engineer or even a cleaner. He must have many trades under his belt. It is not always possible to do that, and the small firms counselling service has done much to ensure that firms do not run into trouble. Some have criticised it as a nanny operation, but it is an essential operation to advise people who do not always know where they are going. I am a marketing person and when I went into business, my accountant had to give me a piece of paper saying, "You enter it on the left-hand side and put it out on the right-hand side." That was all I knew about book-keeping. Often people need simple advice to enable them to keep their companies going in the right direction.

People are no longer afraid of splitting away and going on their own. I have always admired a company in my constituency called Measurement Technology, because five people who split from a major company and set up on their own—unfortunately, in a rat-infested building—now have a magnificent factory which they built themselves, and employ about 150 people. That is a tribute to them and is the type of thing that we should like to see.

The great silicon valley in America is not dominated only by large companies. Indeed, a company tends not to get too large because, when it attains a staff of 400 or 500 people, it tends to split and the top management goes off to start its own companies. There is nothing wrong with that and we should encourage it.

In this country, we are plugged too much into large operations. We have company cars and pension schemes and, therefore, people do not want to move. All too often, people believe that if one is to have a success mark, one must work, for example, for ICI. They do not believe that it is any use starting up on their own in a small manufacturing company. I am glad to see that we are beginning to push that idea to one side.

I do not wish to dwell too much on the past or on the attitudes of Opposition Members. Instead, I wish to turn to the future and to the Government's policies after the election. First, it is essential that my right hon. and hon. Friends continue their tax cutting programme. A reduction of the standard rate of income tax to 25p in the pound in the foreseeable future will assist not only the self-employed and self-traders, it will also remove the divergence with the initial rate for capital gains tax. As long as that discrepancy remains, there is always an incentive for small firms to sell out, and we do not want that to occur.

Secondly, I hope to see a smoother progression in the rate at which small companies pay corporation tax. There is still too sharp a transition between the lower and full rates of that tax. Furthermore, as many of my hon. Friends have urged recently, it should be possible for small companies to make advance payments which can be offset against future research and development, or expansion. Funding such expenditure is still one of the key problems for small firms. I have plugged away for the introduction of graduated corporation tax for many years, as has my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls). That should be done so that companies are not suddenly penalised. Indeed, I do not see why there should not be a tax holiday. As happens in income tax, a small company should not pay corporation tax on, for example, the first £5,000 or £10,000. That would encourage small businessmen to re-invest their money. It always upsets me that one must pay tax when trying to re-invest in one's company. Then, having paid the tax, one must go to the bank and borrow more money to put into the company. Obviously, the larger the firm the more able it is to manipulate its financial position and it does not necessarily pay that tax. Instead, the small business man is hit.

I have said on several occasions in the House, and I shall do so again now, that the thing that makes me most cross is when a small business man who desperately wants to invest more for the future goes out and buys an enormous desk, which is no use to anyone, simply to beat the tax man, or buys a big car just before the end of the tax year. We do not want him to do that. We want him to have the same flexibility in planning for the future as a big company. We want him to re-invest his own money in that business.

Fortunately, there is now a wider range of financial help available from the clearing banks and other institutions than ever before. I should like to pay tribute to the banks for that. However, they have not yet got it quite right and we must push them still further. I find that whenever I criticise the banks they invite me for lunch. I hope that they do so now because I shall tell them again that they must get their act together even more. We see wonderful advertisements on the television, but the reality is never the same as the golden magic that they pretend exists in the banks. However, it is the City which since 1978 has undergone the most marked transformation of attitudes to small businesses. The fact that banks advertise on television and take full-page advertisements in newspapers, which are aimed at small businesses, suggests that we are getting there.

The tragedy is that some local authorities, especially in inner-city areas, are still highly obstructive. They have tried to prevent local services from being put out to tender and have imposed extremely negative tests on potential applicants. Instead of fostering the growth of small retailers and manufacturers, they have raised rates thereby driving existing small businesses out and inhibiting the development of new ones. All the available evidence suggests that small firms, that is those employing fewer than 20 people, are the most effective agents for creating new jobs.

A commitment to open up inner-city areas to small businesses to enable them to find and develop premises without being strangled by red tape or penalised by excessive rates is required urgently. I see no reason why, in the initial four or five years of its life, a new small company in a deprived area, such as Toxteth in Liverpool, should pay any rates. Nor is there any valid reason for confining the repair and restoration of houses in inner-city areas, particularly on some of our bigger estates which are still owned by local authorities, to local authority municipal labour forces or, indeed, to major contractors. We should be prepared to break down contracts to permit small builders, plumbers and, sometimes, even tenants to undertake the work.

We can make most progress at local level. Small businesses are not the enemies of Labour-controlled local authorities; they are the most effective generators of new employment and the most active means of regenerating deprived areas. It is essential that premises are available to them and that the barriers to their establishment are removed.

My right hon. and hon. Friends and I are proud of the record of the past eight years which represents an unparalleled achievement. When I first spoke in the House that was one of my major hopes and I took on the chairmanship of the Conservative small businesses committee to keep that hope alive. Now it has been turned into reality. I am determined that the advances we have made shall not be lost. They must be the springboard for further progress by small businesses. Small businesses know who their supporters are in the House, and I am convinced that they will recognise that next month and give the Government the opportunity to move forward in the years ahead.

12.22 pm

Sir Paul Hawkins (Norfolk, South-West): I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for giving me this last opportunity to speak in the House.

First, I should like to congratulate my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment. We have all paid tribute to him, but the way in which he has managed to maintain pressure for small businesses fills me with amazement. He has terrific energy, yet does not have a bald spot on his head and has only a few grey hairs. He has created a completely different feel throughout the country for self-employed people and small businesses.

The hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) spoke tremendous good sense. We were both members of the same profession and today we shall both leave the House, for my part sadly. This subject is of the greatest importance to Norfolk and my constituency, but in a different way from that of my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King), whose experience stems from large towns. The whole of Norfolk is an area of small scattered villages and market towns with three large places of employment at the corners of the county. Norwich would not say that it was on a corner, and I suppose Yarmouth will be annoyed if I do not mention it as an employment centre.

Norwich, King's Lynn and Thetford are the three main areas of employment for my constituency. Thousands of people travel 30 or 40 miles to those employment centres. More and more people are becoming fed up with the long travelling times and the immense cost of travelling. They often find that their neighbours who sit at home and do not get on their bicycles or off their backsides to try to find jobs are better off than they are. People who go to seek work in one of these main centres of employment are often asked by their wives if there is any point in getting up an hour earlier and taking an hour to get home and flogging to and from Norwich, King's Lynn or Thetford when they are no better off and will need a new car before long.

One of the great things about small businesses is that many of them are set up in small towns and villages close to where people live. We must go on pressing for that to continue. We have a large number of council houses which used to be occupied by farm workers. In the past, three, four or more workers were required per 100 acres, but nowadays only one man is required for 500 or 600 acres. The people who live in those houses want work close to home. We must go on pressing local authorities to make more use of farm buildings, even though some local authorities are beginning to do that.

In my part of the world farm buildings are very attractive with pantiled roofs. However, they are low buildings which will take farm carts but not large implements. Those buildings and barns are falling down, but in many instances they could be converted into small premises for a three or four-man starter business. They could also be used by a craftsman who wants to work on his own or with an assistant or apprentice either making furniture or carrying on one of the many other trades found in the countryside. I hope that my hon. Friend will go on pressing local authorities to help in this way. Much has been done and I praise that, but much still remains to be done.

People who want to set up in farming in a small way should be brought into some of the training schemes that are available. It seems totally wrong that while every other type of business can be assisted by business schemes, the small farmer who wants to set up on his own and wants some assistance does not seem able to find any help. Advertising of all the schemes should be carried out in far simpler terms and in local papers. We need fewer and less complicated schemes. The advice service should be as readily available as is humanly possible.

I fear that banks are not as friendly as they are made out to be or perhaps they are more strictly controlled nowadays from remote headquarters than they were in the past. I remember finding some correspondence between a local director of Barclay's bank in King's Lynn and my grandfather. My grandfather had started an auction market and some people will know that if one has a market on Tuesday one pays out the same night. In the old days people did not pay that in until Saturday. But more and more people were paying in more quickly and my grandfather did not get his money in until about 10 days later. The "Mr. Gurney" of those days wrote to my grandfather and said, "It is about time that you reduced your overdraft", which went up alarmingly at certain times

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of the week. My grandfather wrote back and said, "I have entrusted you with my money, Mr. Gurney, for the past 15 to 20 years; I think you should be able to trust me for the next few years." Mr. Gurney wrote back and said, "Hawkins, you are quite right". To allow the local bank manager a little more leeway, because he knows his customers, would be a good thing; I think that my hon. Friend the Minister can press the banks to be a little more human.

Back-up is needed not only to start a business but to continue it. The worst time that I experienced was when I returned from the war. My business had been running for nearly 100 years, but it was almost bankrupt. I should have been partner at the the beginning of the war, but my father was very ill and my uncle, who had been the other partner, died during the war. Luckily, people were very kind to me and after about two or three years business began to build up, but that was the time when one needed the help and understanding of banks and other people to be able to continue. Firms that have been in business for about three, four or five years come upon a time when their plight is very difficult and that is when they need some help.

I wish that more people would live above their shop or close to their businesses. We find that in towns everybody deserts them and lives about 30 or 40 miles out. I have been lucky because I lived down the yard from my business and I built a house in the old stabling where we used to have horse sales. It can be of great help to live close to the business when one is a small business man. The Government and the Minister have done more for the enterprise of individual people than anyone I have previously known.

I should like to end by thanking the staff and my colleagues, with whom I have had such a happy 22 years, for all the kindnesses that I and the others who are leaving this House have enjoyed.

12.33 pm

Mr. Bruce George (Walsall, South): It is a pleasure and an honour to follow a speech such as that which we have just heard from the hon. Member for Norfolk, South-West (Sir P. Hawkins). It must be very sad to be leaving the House, having spent so much of one's life in it. Many speeches have been made by those hon. Members who have chosen to depart. I have not chosen to depart and I hope that this is not my last speech in the House. My majority is 702 and I hope that the good people of Walsall will allow me to serve in the House for at least as long as the hon. Member for Norfolk, South-West.

The end of a Parliament is a useful time to take stock of one's own endeavours, of the future of the country and of one's region and constituency. At the end of the 1974-79 Parliament, I was fortunate to obtain the last Adjournment debate on the state of industry in my constituency. The Minister who replied was the late, lamented Guy Barnett. He had strong links with my constituency. As the Minister responsible for industry, he was seen in my constituency almost as the Minister for the town, such was the assistance that he rendered to Walsall and Darlaston, which I represent.

When I reread our speeches of 1979 and contrast the position then with today's, I do not see, unlike other hon. Members, the past eight years as years of almost unparalleled success. They have been the reverse. I do not speak as a partisan politician who sees everything that his party did in a wonderful light and everything done by the other party in pejorative terms. Life is much more complicated than that. But this morning we have heard almost a caricature of reality. This afternoon, I shall host a reception downstairs for a launching of a book on the Falklands called "The Fog of War" by Derryk Mercer. The fog can be natural or deliberately induced. This morning, we have had the deliberately induced meteorological variety, confusing everyone.

Those who are perhaps visiting London and have stumbled into this place to sit in the Strangers Gallery and those who are listening to the debate may have gained the impression that we are on the verge of a Japanese-style industrial revolution. I suggest that people jump on a train at Euston and travel to the midlands or the north where they will see a different pattern which totally belies the euphoric atmosphere that some hon. Members have created, deluding not just the public but constituents. Conditions are far from euphoric north of London.

Life is full of bewildering elements. How can one argue that there has been a revival when one looks at the midlands, which was the power house of the national economy until perhaps a decade ago? No one could argue with any sense that the industrial decline in the west midlands began in 1979. It was gradual and has been accelerated by the Government's ineptitude.

Unemployment in my constituency was 5 per cent. in 1979. I recall an industry Minister coming to Darlaston in 1978 and being berated by virtually all the trade union convenors. They asked, "How can you stand there and tolerate unemployment in this town of 4·9 per cent.?" Virtually every one of the establishments that they represented is now defunct or has been so truncated as to be but a shadow of its former self.

Manufacturing industry in the west midlands and my constituency has collapsed, although a large number of small enterprises have been created. I very much welcome the establishment of any enterprise of any size. I desperately hope that the small companies will become the ICIs of tomorrow. We should remember a company in my constituency, GKN Bolts and Nuts, which ended its long connection with my constituency. A number of smaller units have been established on that site. I go there and am delighted about the developement. I applaud what is being done. One company has gone and 30 are appearing, giving the superficial impression of an enormous increase in employment, but the reverse is true. However, the aggregate of people employed in many of those larger units, which to an extent have supplanted the defunct factories, represents a small percentage of the former work force.

I find the present state of affairs sad. I am a non-ideological, non-partisan politician. The main thing I want to see is jobs created in my constituency in the west midlands and in the rest of the country. If the Conservatives were able to achieve that goal, I would applaud them and I would be prepared to leave aside partisan politics, but I do not see that golden dawn emerging. I believe that the electors are being subjected to a confidence trick of mammoth proportions.

Mr. Trippier: I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman started his speech in a non-partisan manner, but now we are getting to the quarrelling stage. I believe that it is a massive con trick on the part of the Labour party to try to convince the country that the larger companies, such as GKN and other household names, will increase their share of the labour market. That is a non-partisan point. It is unlikely that those companies will take on more labour because of the increase in modern technology and higher productivity per man. Such companies are much more likely to shed more labour, even though they will make increased profits. However, all the evidence in this country and abroad shows that there will be a dramatic growth in employment in those companies employing fewer than 20 people.

Mr. George: I do not share the Minister's optimism.

One of the engines of recovery, introduced by the Government for the area that I represent is the Black Country urban development corporation. The Order establishing it passed through its parliamentary stages on Tuesday and I was a member of the Committee that waved it into existence. In the debate, the Minister alluded to a document that stated that 17,000 new jobs would be created in Sandwell, and in the Darlaston area of my constituency. There is little to underpin that argument. It appeared almost as though those figures were plucked out of the air.

Earlier I spoke of an attempt to delude the population. Thousands of years ago Plato talked about the "noble lie". If one repeats a noble lie frequently enough, people will believe it. This morning we have heard a line of argument —it will be repeated in the election campaign—that is persuasive but fallacious. The country is told, "We have suffered in the past, but the worst is over. All of the factors are now combining to produce a take-off. You have pulled in your belts; now let us see the virtues of sacrifice and the virtue and wisdom of this Government." That fiction may or may not survive the next month. However, if it does, we shall see the mirage disappear. The anticipated 17,000 jobs will not be created in Sandwell or Darlaston. There is little evidence to support that argument.

We have witnessed the collapse of manufacturing industry. Some 80 years ago, Lloyd George — no relation, but I am not entirely certain—visited the town of Walsall. He described it as a town of 100 trades. On the basis of economic statistics it is possible to extrapolate that we are almost heading towards a town of 100 jobs. I am not arguing that all the blame can be attributed to the Government. However, as a result of the Government's policies, I have seen the progressive elimination of large, medium and small companies in my area. The roll call of dead or dying companies is alarming.

I recall one of my speeches in 1979—I am almost reaching Harold Wilson proportions in recalling my old speeches, and I apologise—in the final debate of that Parliament. I listed those companies in my constituency that were in some difficulty but had good futures. The reason why I said that those companies had good prospects was that I had conducted a survey a few months previously among those companies and they had said, "Yes, we are OK. We see the future in a reasonably clear fashion. We are happy about it."

Of those companies Rubery Owen has almost completely gone from my constituency. I led a deputation to the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) when he was at the Department of Trade and Industry. I asked him to find a grant to keep the company afloat until something better came along. He turned to his civil servants and they decided on using the derelict land clearance scheme. The site was razed and trees planted so that a new enterprise might be established. Industry is not to take on the site but houses are to be built there.

Eaton Axles, an American company, has gone. F. H. Lloyd deliberately fell on its sword as a result of an appalling deal struck between a number of companies based on a scheme instituted by Lazard. The situation is desperately unhappy. One can list companies such as Charles Richards. They are gone, gone, gone.

There is talk of a revival, but I say that there is no revival. It may be happening in some other areas—I doubt it — but it is certainly not happening in my constituency, which is typical.

The Government have let down the area that I represent. I want to encourage industry to move to my constituency. A few days ago I took a day off, at a busy time for us all, to try to facilitate the move by one small company from a part of the west midlands outside my constituency to my constituency. On Monday I am to have a meeting with the chief executive of Walsall council and hopefully a new company will be set up. However successful the Government's policy, it will only partly fill the vacuum left by history, neglect and their policies.

I have spoken of fiction and of "the fog of war" created by this Government. The unemployment statistics were published yesterday, well timed for the election. They apparently show a fall in unemployment. They are an attempt to stampede people into thinking that all is well. When the Government came to office, just over 1 million people were unemployed, and now the Government claim success as the 3 million barrier is crossed. What kind of success is that? How can one throw one's hands in the air with glee when only eight years ago unemployment was one third of today's 3 million. We know why the figures are coming down. It is only partially because new jobs are being created. It is the result of incredibly sophisticated —but crude in some ways—creative accountancy.

In Walsall 6,500 youngsters are on job creation schemes. I welcome any training programme, but those youngsters have been removed from the unemployment statistics. That 6,500 should be added to the 17,000 official figure. The real figure is well above the 16 per cent. officially attributed to the Walsall travel-to-work area. The real unemployment figure is about 25 per cent. The problem is acute. No amount of massaging of the figures and euphoric speeches will alter the underlying decline in employment in my constituency.

I shall attend a meeting this evening with some business men from Caldmore in my constituency. They are mainly Asian shopkeepers who are worried about crime with which the Government claim to be dealing so effectively. I raise this issue, not because I am making a speech about crime and law and order, but because it shows that there is a link between the growth in crime and the alarm that it has caused among many small business men. In the H division of the west midlands police force—the Walsall area—crime has doubled in the eight years since the Government took office. The number of police officers has risen fractionally, but the amount of overtime worked in the past eight years has fallen to less than half of what it was in 1979. Therefore, there are fewer policemen on the beat and driving around in cars now than there were in 1979 and 1980.

The results are obvious; crime is proliferating. Police officers are doing jobs that they were doing to a much lesser extent seven or eight years ago—for example,

[Mr. George]

dealing with crimes involving drugs. At the present time the police are expending a great deal of their effort on preparing to deal with public order disturbances. The community — business men and ordinary citizens — is literally walking in fear. That is what has happened in the period between 1979 and 1987. Crime is affecting small businesses; theft and vandalism make business men reluctant to establish themselves in parts of town that may be run down. The very parts that require regeneration and resources are in an environment in which business men may be timid about establishing their enterprises.

The picture that has emerged does not inspire me with any great feelings of anticipation or eagerness. The Government have said that they will set up urban development corporations, to which I would give a cautious welcome. It would be remiss of me to turn down any money that came into a deprived part of my constituency, such as Darlaston; I would not want to do that. I welcome the resources that will come—I hope that they will come — but I am sceptical about the method used to bring resources into the town.

I am a great believer in local government, and I have campaigned for a number of years to get the local authority to see its role more in terms of initiating enterprises, sustaining them and creating an environment that would make more employers want to come to the town. The local authority with which I work—Walsall—has done a good job. Its major problem is that of derelict land. Much of my constituency—especially Darlaston—consists of land that has fallen into disuse. Formerly it was industrial land; it is now moribund and useless. It must be brought back into use for industry, for housing and for other purposes, but that can be done only at a high cost.

Regrettably, the amount of money given to authorities such as Walsall to start work on their derelict land has been grossly inadequate. If they had been given adequate resources to reclaim that land, that would have created an environment in which industry would be more prepared to invest. If local authorities had adequate resources to create infrastructure on that derelict land, that would be a further bonus. If the Government had been more prepared to give grants to help companies that were in difficulty, those companies would have been sustained, but they have gone to the wall. I should have thought that local authorities would be the agents for industrial regeneration if they had been given the proper resources.

The great advantage of local authorities becoming more professional, when given proper resources, is that they know their areas; and there are good links between local authorities such as Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. They could have been the engine of regeneration to supplement other approaches.

Ostensibly, the Government are anti-quango. When the Conservative party was in opposition, there was an enormous campaign against quangos. The Conservatives said how repugnant they were and that they must be abolished. What did the Conservative Government do? They abandoned the democratic principle by allowing the local authorities to provide regeneration in rundown areas, and they set up the quangos to achieve that.

A couple of weeks ago I attended the first meeting of the Darlaston local committee in Darlaston town hall. It was an initiative by the local authority to bring local people into the planning process. People were given the opportunity to get problems off their chest and to settle scores with councillors for not having done the jobs that they asked them to do. It was the nucleus of genuine input by the public, so that planners would not pursue a policy and then find that it ran counter to local wishes. Such local committees exist throughout the town. They can be used for grievances and settling scores. If handled properly, they can be a great opportunity for public participation. "Public participation" is not an empty expression, but the public can genuinely participate.

The Black Country urban development corporation, a quango that is on some form of pedestal, will have money to put in. We shall lose the democratic input. I hope very much that there are discussions between the local authorities and the development corporations to try to achieve a proper working relationship. I do not want to see duplication of planning between Walsall council and the urban development corporation. I want to see a harmonious relationship. I hope that the development corporation will work with the local authority to cut down bureaucracy and achieve a common objective. In 12 months perhaps we shall see the extent to which the development corporation has achieved its objective of bringing industry to the town—not by funding it, which is not its responsibility, but by creating an environment in which industry is prepared to operate. I hope that that will be successful, but I believe that some of the hype to which we have been subjected in recent weeks is over-optimistic.

We are reaching a critical phase in our national and industrial development, which may be a turning point in British political and industrial history. We always talk about each election being an epoch-making or watershed election. Perhaps this one will be. If the Conservative party is successful, perhaps we shall see an economy which in many ways will be a negation of the economy that we have worked for collectively for four decades or more. I do not like to see such a society, with the get-rich quick approach where the wealthy are doing pretty well and the unemployed and those at the bottom end of the economic and social scale are the victims of other people's success.

The task facing Britain and other industrialised nations is to create sustained growth in employment and to raise living standards, but that will come about through a proper industrial strategy dedicated to securing our economic future. It will be done by rebuilding industry. Much as I want to see small industry prosper, I do not want us to go overboard and see the future of Britain as consisting of the small industrial sector, when we lose one after another of our industrial giants, with one taken over by another foreign company. I do not want our economy to be sustained largely by the service sector.

I do not want the west midlands to be a grand tourist centre, with tourism being a substitute for other industries. We want manufacturing industry to return, and that can come about not through the approach taken by the Government, but through an alternative approach. We want sustainable growth of output and employment, and that requires a steady improvement in our trade performance in manufacturing.

The Government have retarded economic recovery. What we shall do to help small and large businesses is introduce an emergency programme to cut unemployment by 1 million in two years. This must be just part of a longer term aim of giving more people an opportunity to work. The objective is to create real jobs. I believe that we shall devise and implement a policy that will ensure that the industrial base of my constituency is not diminished and that the unemployment queue will not grow longer.

In the next few weeks, a genuine choice has to be made between whether or not one wants to see a continuation of the Government's policies. In my constituency and many others, those policies have led to the industrial base being truncated and hope being eliminated from the hearts of many people. An example of such people is the young man I met a couple of weeks ago who, at the age of 22, apart from a short spell on a job creation scheme, has been unemployed since he left school at 16.

This morning we have heard a great deal about how wonderful is the small sector of industry. I applaud that sector, but I want a healthy private sector operating alongside a healthy public sector. The aim must be to create viable jobs that will be sustained in a difficult world where international competition is becoming more and more intense. I hope that people will not be conned by the lie that we have heard over the past few weeks and that we shall hear more and more over the next few weeks. The economy is not entering a period of sustained growth. The continuation of this Government's policies will result inevitably in the further decline of manufacturing industry.

1.1 pm

Sir John Page (Harrow, West): It is a pleasure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the last occasion that I shall speak in the House, to be called by a Deputy Speaker who is such an old friend of mine. I remember many occasions when you were a Minister at the Ministry of Labour, and I was chairman of the Conservative party labour committee and we used to cross swords, but always in the most friendly way.

This is a friendly occasion, but I felt that the hon. Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) tried to damp some of the enthusiasm in order to further his election chances. I do not agree with his final words of deprecation of the future because, as someone who has spent all his life since 1948 in manufacturing industry, I believe that there is new hope for our industries. There has been an uncomfortable time and some slimming down, but now the chances, in both new technology and in the application of new technology to old industries, are exciting.

My hon. Friend the Minister has done a great deal in getting around to many small businesses of all kinds during the time that he has been responsible for them. I congratulate him on the amount of travel he has done, the time he has spent, and the deep understanding that he has shown. Whether he continues in his present position after the general election or becomes Foreign Secretary or Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, which, would be well deserved, I ask him to continue to take an interest in small businesses and see whether bureaucracy can be reduced still further. Small business men still tell me about the number of forms, such as those for VAT, which they have to fill in, which make life difficult.

It is difficult for the corner shop to survive in the days of the supermarket. However, those that remain provide a service that cannot be given by the supermarkets, and they will survive and grow.

I will give a couple of examples. In the village where I live, there were two bakeries 30 years ago, but 15 years ago they vanished and for 10 years the shops sold Mother's Pride homebake and the like which seemed to be provided by the manufacturers of cotton wool rather than bread. Now, however, I am pleased to say that we once again have two bakeries. Another example of a highly successful small business is the shop near the Terrace in this building which must have a bigger turnover per sq ft than any other retail outlet in the country. The queues there at Christmas time and, indeed, when I went along there 10 minutes ago show what an excellent service it provides.

I hope that I shall not be out of order in using that last example as a bridge to my next remarks. It is the quality of service that Members of Parliament receive from all the staff that makes the House of Commons such a marvellous place to work in and I have been very moved by that experience. We have the ultimate elite of Clerks, all of whom know so much more than the Members who come to them for advice but deal with us very gently. Then there are the *Hansard* Reporters. I do not know how they manage, especially when a Member such as my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) is speaking. There are also the people in the Library and the research department and in the Refreshment Department. There are the Badge Messengers and the police. All of them make our lives here so happy. Not once in 27 years has any member of staff ever been the faintest bit rude or discourteous to me, to any of my guests or to any of my constituents who have sometimes come in their hundreds as my constituency is so near London. I hope that over the years this marvellous standard of service will continue in the greatest Parliament in the world.

1.7 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): It is an enormous pleasure and privilege to follow in the debate my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Sir J. Page), who has been a friend of mine since I was very green and wet behind the ears in Conservative politics. My hon. Friend has always been most generous in allowing me to expose his constituents to my tyro attempts at boring them to death—I have become much better at that lately—and I am very sorry that he will not be with us in the next Parliament. He and others who have spoken today have given a great deal to this place, and as one who came into the House at the last general election I know how much we owe to older Members who have been here for a long time. I am honoured to follow my hon. Friend in the debates today.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) has temporarily left the Chamber, as I was somewhat dismayed by his contribution and would like to take up one or two points that he made. For a child, one of the most exciting moments at the pantomime is when the dry ice is activated and the auditorium begins to fill with smoke from below, and as it fills up all kinds of magical things happen behind the smoke. As the hon. Member for Walsall, South was speaking, I could not help visualising those engines of fog in the wings. Fortunately, dry ice smoke evaporates very rapidly and I hope that by making one or two observations I shall accelerate the process a little.

I suspect that the hon. Member for Walsall, South felt a desire to show that he conforms with Labour party policy. In these hard times it must be gratifying to find an hon. Member in the Labour party who does conform with the party line. He was talking about the unemployment figures and the way in which they appear to say one thing

[Mr. Andrew Rowe]

whereas in reality they say another. Most of the comments from Opposition Members in the House about the unemployment figures are hypocritical. For example, many people in the Labour party believe that it would be appropriate to reduce the age of male retirement to 62½ and some go down as far as 60 years to have parity with women. Were they to succeed they would remove a considerable number from the labour market at a stroke. I wonder whether they would continue to count 62½-year-olds and 63-year-olds as unemployed. If they did not, would that not be massaging the figures in the same way as they accuse us of doing? If people are in the employment market looking for jobs and cannot find them, they are unemployed. If they are in a category which, for whatever reason, is not looking for work, they are not unemployed. The sooner the public understand that all the talk about massaging the unemployment figures is a lot of my eye and Betty Martin the better.

The hon. Member for Walsall, South also talked about the history of the west midlands. He argued that it was somehow the Government's fault that the west midlands was in decline and that no amount of small business regeneration could possibly replace the prosperity that has disappeared.

When I first took an interest in small businesses about 11 years ago and I and the then hon. Member for Basingstoke, now my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, North-West (Mr. Mitchell), established a small business bureau — the first and only pressure group within a political party in this country aimed explicitly at assisting small firms — the first major campaign we ran was against the legislative monstrosity called the West Midlands County Council Bill. It was an extraordinary piece of dirigiste legislation aimed at enabling that great county council, which has long since died, to set up small businesses for itself. It was to be able to set up florists, hairdressers, travel agencies and a whole host of small firms on the basis that, with its large bureaucratic organisation and what the hon. Member for Walsall, South calls its close understanding of the local community, it would be able to run the small firms with far greater effect than entrepreneurs for whom such firms would be their only livelihood. I am glad to say that the first and great success of the small business bureau was to assist in the destruction of that piece of legislation.

If the hon. Member for Walsall, South was in the Chamber I would tell him that small firms thrive in places where they are respected and valued. It may be that little by little and grudgingly some Opposition Members are beginning to feel attracted to small firms because they see them, however unwillingly, as generators of employment. The attitude that scums through is one of the grudging acceptance of them, not of the joyful championing of them.

It is not the slightest use Labour Members preaching that they support small firms while they are struggling but continue to berate successful business men as being cancerous parasites on the body politic. They say that anybody who makes a success of his business, takes home a profit, increases employment and does well is to be despised, but that if he is not doing very well he is desirable. The characteristics of a business man are the same from beginning to end. If the only contribution of Labour Members is to find ways of increasing taxation and of destroying business incentives, it is scarcely surprising that small business men who wish to set out on this rocky path go to areas where they know that, if they succeed, they will be as welcome as they were when they began.

The Minister has been astonishingly patient, as he always is, with the long speeches that have been made today. I should like to make only one or two brief comments. First, when the Government came to power in 1979 we had the most densely concentrated economy in western Europe. The 100 largest firms in Britain occupied a larger share of the gross national product than the 100 largest firms in any other country in the industrialised world. That was a dangerous position to be in. In 1979 it looked as if that position would continue with accelerating speed. That made us vulnerable to the industrial action of trade unions and to changing features in the international business scene. It made us vulnerable because large firms find it difficult to adjust rapidly to changing circumstances, as my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, South (Mr. Bright) pointed out. That position has begun to change quite rapidly. The concentration of wealth and employment in the country is now far more widespread, which is a good thing.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West (Sir P. Hawkins) said, in 1979 business men had nowhere to start. I wrote a pamphlet called "Somewhere to start". The evidence of the hostility of many local authorities to small firms, particularly if they wanted to use disused agricultural buildings, was overwhelming. since the Government came to power in 1979 that has been changing. In those days what I call "The Archers" syndrome was dominant. That was the wonderful attitude of people who had lived and worked on the outskirts of large towns and who had moved to the country in their retirement with the wonderful vision of birds, butterflies and the quiet of the countryside. The moment that business men decided that they would like to start a small business in their area, those people instantly objected with a passion that only somebody who did not understand the countryside could arouse.

The countryside and country villages can survive only if there is employment for the people who live there, and the development of small firms in the countryside is an important element which the Government have understood well. They have given great support to COSIRA and to the Development Commission, where Lord Vinson is doing a remarkable job. The light has largely dawned, and I believe that that is another admirable example of the way in which skilful Government support in small doses can have a remarkable effect.

As we enter a general election, I say to my great party —some of my hon. Friends do not agree with me on this — that the remarkable revival of small businesses under this Government is an example of skilfully employed Government intervention. There is a place in a Conservative Government for the skilful use of intervention to enable people who have been labouring under enormous disadvantages to throw off those disadvantages until they are capable of saying to nanny, "Goodbye. Thank you very much. We have done very well."

In 1979, small firms were dying in droves, partly because they had been encouraged to borrow too much and were clobbered by high interest rates. The Conservative Government have cut tax, so more money remains in the business. We have also cut interest rates, so debts are cheaper to service. One of the most remarkable developments of the past 11 years has been the creation of a vigorous venture capital industry which is making an enormous impact on the provision of money for small firms. That is another tribute to the stability of the economy under the Conservative Government.

I must declare an interest in that I have been asked whether I would assist the British Franchise Association in its operations. I pay tribute to the franchising industry. During the past few years, there has been a tremendous growth in franchising, and the latest report suggests that the business itself—apart from the firms that benefit from its existence—has created more than 113,000 jobs. Last year, its annual sales were worth more than £2 billion. Franchising is the easiest way for a certain type of small business man to start because he has the advantage of the franchisor providing him with financial backing, marketing skills, other back-up and a proven product. Franchisees are doing extremely well. The industry does not seek Government interference, but it will continue to look for Government support and encouragement. Rocky times are ahead, not least because some people who call themselves franchisors are not that at all and are easily confused in the public eye with people who run genuine franchise operations.

I shall make two more points and then shut up. Small firms can make an enormous contribution not only to employment but to training. I am a member of the Select Committee on Employment. We have established the fact that the British Government spend as much on training our work force as almost any of our competitors, but that our employers spend very much less. How can we get businesses to see training not as an overhead cost but as an investment? I fear that a change of attitude is required but that it will be difficult to engender.

The next Conservative Government must seriously consider whether to offer incentives for training personnel to a company, or whether to offer tax incentives to the employees so that they will improve their own training. Perhaps a company could offset the costs of that training against its taxation charges.

We have heard the detail of many points relating to small businesses, but today we have not discussed the political effects of the great changes that we have seen under this Government. Encouraging small firms enables one to fragment power. If there are concentrations of power at the centre, there is always the temptation to autocratic government. Breaking up the concentration of large firms and creating small ones enormously assists the decentralisation of power, which is an essential part of Conservative philosophy.

I am interested in the Small Businesses Bureau, which is a founding member of the European Medium and Small Business Union. There may be hon. Members in the House—there are not many to choose from at the moment—who have not heard of the European Medium and Small Business Union. It is a group of right-of-centre European political parties and is interested in small businesses. At the moment 14 countries are members, and I have no doubt that we shall have more. What is interesting about EMSU is that when we have meetings we talk a good deal about hard matters of practice, such as restrictions on cross-frontier trade, taxation policies, protection policies, discriminatory discounting and all sorts of things that worry small firms. However, we also talk about the political conditions that are needed to enable small firms to thrive and to allow people to be more independent and free-standing because that makes them independent and free-standing in politics and is an essential part of this great resurgence in small companies.

One thing that EMSU shows us is the tremendous importance of chambers of commerce in many of the countries that are friendly to us. I hope that my hon. Friend and his ministerial colleagues will reconsider the position of our chambers of commerce which are greatly under-resourced. In other countries they derive huge assistance from the fact that, as each company is formed, it becomes a member of its chamber of commerce, and pays a small subscription. Those subscriptions provide the resources that enable chambers of commerce in, for example, Germany to be one of the great engines for training. The apprenticeship system in Germany, where examinations are created and moderated by the chambers of commerce, has proved to be one of the ways by which the German work force has a far higher standard of training than we have. Perhaps we should consider that.

Another matter on our agenda should be the question of bankruptcy. In the United States it is commonplace for successful business men to have been bankrupted twice or even three times before they take that experience into a successful business. In this country, we have been rightly anxious to catch the real crooks, who go into business to build up debts and go bankrupt to avoid paying them, so bankruptcy has become a slur on honest but unfortunate business men. We should consider that.

Since 1979 the business scene in the United Kingdom has been wholly transformed. Year in year out the Government have used their succession of energetic, hard working and highly intelligent small business Ministers to change the whole climate of operation. It is no longer regarded as second best to go into business on one's own; as an untenable proposition for school children to leave school, gain experience and start their own business; or as some sort of has-been operation when one cannot get a job in a big business. That is to say, it is no longer so regarded by Conservative Members. Naturally, Opposition Members regard any change as for the worse and there is still no sign that they value small businesses, have any intention to help them grow or that a Labour Government would avoid penalising them with crippling taxation if they were successful.

For those reasons, at this election small business men have absolutely no alternative but to vote Conservative.

1.31 pm

Mr. Colin Moynihan (Lewisham, East): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment on his birthday. He has come to the Chamber on his birthday to reply to the last debate of this parliamentary Session and all hon. Members present and, indeed, some outside the House will wish to join me in congratulating him on reaching the fine age of 41. They will also join me in congratulating him on an outstanding tenure of office.

Mr. Rowe: My hon. Friend congratulates the Minister on coming to the Chamber on various auspicious occasions and, indeed, our experience is of the Minister coming to the Chamber on an endless succession of occasions when he has been either adding to his family or

[Mr. Rowe]

celebrating his birthday. It is an unkind fate that pushes him into these situations. If either the Minister or his parliamentary private secretary could give me a list of important family events in the Minister's life, I shall know when we are likely to have debates on small businesses.

Mr. Moynihan: I am grateful for that suggestion and, indeed, am about to write to hon. Members. I shall give due consideration to the possibility of producing a small catalogue of forthcoming events in the Minister's diary so that they can be well briefed to contribute, as my hon. Friend did so eloquently today, in other important debates which coincide with engagements in the Minister's social calendar.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on his outstanding contribution in assisting small businesses and developing small firms. He brought expertise and skill to the Department of the Environment from other Departments, which are unmentionable when one considers the tremendously strong team at the Department of Employment. With his knowledge he has also brought success for small businesses and I wish to concentrate on some of those successes.

Although reference has been made to some Government initiatives to help small businesses, not enough consideration has gone into the extent to which small businesses contribute to the economy. About 2·5 million people are self-employed, an increase of 750,000 since 1979. That is extremely important because in Britain small firms now account for an estimated 96 per cent. of all firms. They make a contribution of 20 per cent. to our gross national product and employ 25 per cent. of the total workforce.

It is commendable that the Government have tackled many of the problems facing small firms. That excellent booklet called "Cutting Red Tape" and produced by the Department of Employment has assisted many small firms to overcome the major problem of bureaucracy. It has eased the difficulty of endless form filling and cut the hours that were required to submit the tremendous amount of detail and data required by officials and by Government. Small firms can now spend less time on those things and can concentrate more on the important job of creating wealth, profits and jobs.

The Minister has served the small business sector well in that respect and deserves to be congratulated by all hon. Members on the work that he has done.

I regret the use of the phrase small business man. Why do we need to be so "heightist" when it is the size of the business that we are talking about. I am not a tall person, but it is rather sad that the derogatory title "small" has to be used about business men. I hope that some of the inner London boroughs and the Inner London education authority will take note of my comments about "heightism" and that the Minister will consider finding an alternative title. Perhaps we should speak about business men who employ a certain number of people or choose some other appropriate title rather than use this discriminatory heightist slur.

Many business men, both large and small, have entered the market. So many of them are now contributing to the economy that there is no doubt whatever that small businesses are a vital part of the economy, not least because they employ one quarter of the total work force.

Conservatives believe that no section of industry or commerce is more representative of the entrepreneurial spirit of this country than small business men, and that is because of the contribution that they make. We believe that everything possible should be done to assist that sector of the economy to develop and to grow and contribute. To do that we need to concentrate on training, and it is significant that 30,000 hours of training material have been made available on a whole range of subjects in order to assist business men coming into the market or to assist people setting up in business for the first time. That training gives people some of the life skills which in other countries are part and parcel of the education system.

We are working towards such an education system, but we have not quite got there. I shall give an example. The technical and vocational education initiative is excellent. It encourages young people at school to develop what I call life skills, such as basic accounting, how to incorporate a company and about setting up in business. It provides an educational framework so that if young people have entrepreneurial flair and skill they can use that basic education in business to set up their own businesses and to develop from that point to contribute to the economy.

I say that we have not quite got there because I deeply regret that ILEA is not actively supporting that initiative. It is selling short a generation of our young entrepreneurs by not accepting the Government money that is available to train young people. That money could be used to provide educational skills that would enable young people to contribute as small business men and as business men generally and it would help them later in their careers. I understand that we are now in negotiation with ILEA to persuade it to take this scheme on board. I hope that it will rapidly accept Government encouragement and finance to assist our youngsters in the inner London area.

Mr. Rowe: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the reasons why it has been reluctant to do this is that it has so few resources? After all, it spends rather less than double the average on each secondary school child. I am sure that it feels that until it is spending at least double the national average on each school child it cannot possibly contribute even £1 towards improving education for business.

Mr. Moynihan: I take on board my hon. Friend's comments with regard to the spending of the Inner London Education Authority. That is directly relevant to the debate because it is a tax burden through the rates on businesses in London. I hope that the newspaper rumours of the last couple of days that we may read in the Conservative party manifesto that action will be taken to allow schools or perhaps boroughs to opt out of ILEA are true. If that is not in the manifesto, I hope that it will be Conservative party policy in the future because that would ease the considerable burden on the ratepayers and the business ratepayers of London. That can lead to more entrepreneurialism and growth in the small business sector, which I hope we will see. If that happens, I believe that in inner London we will get substantial cuts in the business rate following the reorganisation of the rating system, which will lead to even more cuts, so it is not just the business rates that will be assisted but a substantial proportion of the domestic ratepayers will benefit from the community charge if we go ahead with that scheme.

I hope that the matter which was so accurately pinpointed by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent

(Mr. Rowe) as being central to this debate with regard to the development of youngsters is recognised as being important for the ratepayers and the business rate.

For the first time we have an education authority whose cost per pupil is greater than the average cost to the taxpayer for sending his child to a private school at primary or secondary level. That is now the remarkable position in inner London. The Government have an opportunity to take dramatic action to change the funding of education authorities and shift to the parents the emphasis for running the schools and for choice. I hope that the capitation system will go through. In this sector we can get more initiatives from the parents on training to provide the small business men of tomorrow.

The health of small businesses is vital to the future of the economy and the growth of new jobs. It is essential that small businesses are innovative and flexible. If they are, they can provide the customer with a far wider choice, which is a fundamental Conservative principle.

Undoubtedly the contribution of the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) to the small business sector in his non-political capacity has been substantial on the Isle of Wight. He made an extremely useful contribution to the debate and one that does him credit as a Member of Parliament. He has won the respect and affection of hon. Members on both sides of the House. He highlighted the opportunity in the small business climate to develop new and a wider spread of initiatives and therefore more choice to the consumer.

The record of the Government on small businesses is second to none. I regret that we hear little from the Opposition about small businesses. It is unusual to read anything in print that the Opposition wish to do to encourage the entrepreneurial climate in which small businesses will flourish. It is characteristic of the way that the Opposition treat this subject that the Opposition Benches are completely deserted for this debate. This matter is fundamental to their constituents and it should be important during the coming election campaign.

I hope that it will be noted that so few of the Opposition have contributed to the debate and, more important, for the first time that I can remember, not one member of the Opposition—not even a Whip—is present to hear what, no doubt, will be an outstanding contribution by my hon. Friend the Minister. I have never known precedent in this regard to be broken. I have never known my hon. Friend not to make an outstanding contribution on this subject in the House or outside.

Between 1982 and 1984, under the Government, self-employment and small firms employing fewer than 20 people created 1 million jobs. That shows how serious the issue is. Through the growth of small businesses, we have managed to create 1 million new jobs which have been able to respond to the demands of a rapidly changing technological world. A quick response to service industries is important and it can be made only with the entrepeneurial flair of individuals and small businesses. There is no better example than the development of the Isle of Dogs and the growth in the City, resulting in a need for a range of small business activities to provide support services. Some hon. Members would have seen only last weekend on the television the detailed assessment of the many small businesses that have taken the opportunity provided by Government assistance to speak to constructive local authorities or the London Docklands Development Corporation, which has been very helpful, about providing back-up services, from flower arranging to shoe cleaning. Opposition Members, if they were here, might not consider those services to be important, but they employ a large number of people and have been highly profitable. Twenty seven companies have been set up to provide those services. They have earned a lot of money in the City in the post-big bang era.

Mr. Rowe: Can my hon. Friend help me a little? He may know more about this than I do. It seems to me that one reason why there is a great debate about manufacturing industry is definition. Am I right in believing that there are two principal considerations? First, if a large company allows its transport manager to start a transport company, it ceases to be defined as "manufacturing", although it was so described while it was in-house. Secondly, many large manufacturing companies use small sub-contractors, so are there not probably as many people engaged in some elements of manufacturing now as before? Those people are engaged in very small companies on which statistics are much harder to collect.

Mr. Moynihan: My hon. Friend is right. He has pre-empted my next point. That is rather sad but, in a sense, is for the benefit of the House because my hon. Friend has put it much more eloquently than I could have done. This matter very much concerns my hon. Friend the Minister. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent because it is a key issue and it is important that it should be placed on the record.

Since 1979, the Government and their predecessor have helped small businesses in many ways. I shall concentrate on a few because it is important to put them on the record. The cutting of the burden of capital gains tax and the reform of capital transfer tax to abolish the tax on lifetime giving were significant moves. Equally important were the abolition of the national insurance surcharge and the reduction in the small company rate of corporation tax. That last point has been taken up by many small businesses in my constituency. Many facts have been put through the mail bag to me and, via me, to the Government to support that important incentive for the growth of the entrepreneurial class that works in small businesses.

The introduction of the business expansion scheme is also important and I am glad that hon. Members touched upon that in their speeches today. It gives tax relief to investors in new business—that is relevant to this debate —and I hope that due consideration will be given to going further down that path in the future. That is an extremely important start and that initiative that should be welcomed by both sides of the House. The introduction of the loan guarantee scheme, which makes it easier to borrow money to start up a business, is also important. Once again I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister for the important assistance that he has given to small businesses.

The employment measures that the Government have concentrated upon have given people the opportunity to start up in business. In that respect the enterprise allowance scheme has been of great significance. It has received a tremendous amount of support from people entering into bsiness for the first time. Many of my constituents have benefited from that scheme.

In the past few years I have noted a change in the ethos towards small businesses and the entrepreneurial classes.

[Mr. Moynihan]

Many people are attracted to go down to the jobcentre to receive advice. They are faced with a whole range of options and initiatives to enable them to set up in small business. It is praiseworthy that the Front Bench spokesmen from the Department of Employment, through their wisdom, have managed to achieve the growth in new business that we have seen up and down the country.

Between 1980 and 1985 there has been an average net increase of some 500 new firms every week. That is the sort of excellent result that we have seen and it is an excellent platform on which to go to the country. It shows the electorate that the Conservatives are not only committed to growth, to more employment and to ensure the growth of new firms, but that 1 million jobs have been created in the new business sector. That is a significant fact and one that is welcomed by those 1 million people who have entered the labour market.

When the Minister replies I hope that he will concentrate on tourism. Tourism comes under the umbrella of his duties and it is a significant area of economic growth. If my memory serves me right, tourism is expected to create 30,000 new jobs a year. Indeed, I understand that that figure has risen.

Mr. Trippier: It is now 50,000.

Mr. Moynihan: That is good news. Tourism is a most important industry and it is most important that it is encouraged by the many initiatives that I mentioned earlier.

I believe that there is good evidence to show that tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the country. It is an industry that has brought job opportunities, training opportunities and new skills to many people who would not otherwise have those opportunities. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for ensuring that the tourist sector has gone from strength to strength during his time of responsibility.

In conclusion, I would like to say something about skill shortages and expand on the intervention that my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) made about TVEI—the technical and vocational education initiative. I hope that we will continue to concentrate in preparing young people, through the range of available Government schemes, to enable them to be ready to set up a small business and to contribute to the economy. I believe that the youth training scheme and the job training scheme are exceptionally relevant in that respect, not least because they have been extremely successful. For the one-year YTS there have been 1 million entrants and 60 per cent. of the leavers went into jobs, many of them in small businesses. That is a tremendous result when one considers the unemployment problems throughout the country.

Jobclubs are very successful. They give people skills so that they can join small businesses. Eighteen months ago there were only three or four jobclubs. Now there are over 1,000 and, if necessary, there will be 2,000 by September. That is an illustration of the importance attached to jobclubs. Jobclubs help the long-term unemployed who need help and advice, and 60 per cent. of those who have attended jobclubs now have jobs.

It is disgraceful for the Opposition Front Bench to suggest that they represent only tea and sympathy or that the scheme is a "skivvy". It is disgraceful that they should have the nerve, inside or outside the House, to accuse the Government of introducing a tea and sympathy scheme when that scheme has helped into employment 60 per cent. of those interviewed and taken through the course.

The electorate will decide how to respond to an Opposition who repeatedly attack the unemployment figures and yet publicly announce that if elected again—on some dim and distant day—they will use the same figures that they so regularly criticise.

Time and again the Opposition attack the Government for introducing a range of measures which have resulted in steadily declining unemployment. The Opposition say that they will get rid of the schemes that have assisted people back to employment, that have assisted the young and the long-term unemployed with guidance and advice, job opportunities and training. The Opposition would put in their place schemes linked to local authorities or the public sector, yet they cannot fill the £20,000 council jobs in the Brent education and race relations department. My opponent in the forthcoming election has the nerve to say that we should get rid of the schemes introduced by the Government to help the unemployed.

The Opposition have no better point to make about the growth in employment than to turn their backs on this Government's success in introducing a range of initiatives, such as job training, job release, voluntary programmes and community schemes, and in creating an economic climate in which small businesses can flourish.

I hope that when we go to the polls on 11 June we shall have had the opportunity to concentrate on the opportunities that we have made for people to gain employment. We have created 1 million new jobs since 1983—more than have been created by all the western European countries together. That is our record of success. We have given opportunities to young people. We have initiated schemes such as the technical and vocational education initiative which is so important to young people in helping them join the entrepreneurial work force. We have provided the resources for schools to produce the right skills and training.

The only barrier has been the Labour party, which has opposed our initiatives ideologically. The Labour party on the Inner London Education Authority has said, "No, we will not allow young people to learn those life skills." I hope that the electorate will judge that disgraceful attitude for what it is worth and praise my hon. Friend, the Minister, and his colleagues for facing the incredibly delicate, important and serious problem of creating jobs, creating growth in the economy and creating opportunities in small businesses.

I praise my hon. Friend for the outstanding contribution that he has made during his tenure of office as the Minister responsible for this area, and I congratulate him not only on his verbal contribution, but much more on the facts that he can put to the country to show that what he has done has been highly successful.

2.1 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) for mentioning the fact that today is my birthday. I am trying to forget about it. As my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) pointed out, it is quite amazing that every time there is a small firms debate, an incredible event has occurred that affects me or my family. Last time, it was the christening in the crypt of my youngest son, and I recall that the time before that I received a note, which unnerved me considerably, announcing the birth of my second son, who was some six weeks premature. All those things have happened when we were having debates on small firms. It must have something to do with the enterprising side of the family. My hon. Friend the Member for Fareham (Mr. Lloyd) will forgive me if I blame the Whip's Office for not paying enough attention to these milestones in my family life. It is only because of the demob—happy frame of mind in which we meet today—the last day of this Parliament—that one can say such things.

I must pay a warm tribute to those who have assisted me during the period in which I have been privileged to be the Minister responsible for small firms. I want to thank my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment and my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General for the enormous support they have given to me and to the sector in general. I also thank my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East, who is a distinguished parliamentary private secretary in our Department, for all the help he has given me in recent years. I also wish to pay a warm tribute to the chairman of the small business bureau, my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls), who has made a significant contribution over many years—not only in this Parliament, but long before it—and to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent, who was the founder of the SB bureau, together with one of my predecessors, who was the first Minister responsible for small firms in the present Government. My hon. Friend the Member for Luton, South (Mr. Bright) has been a distinguished chairman of the Back Bench small firms committee, which has been enormously supportive of what we have trying to do, and which has come forward with constructive suggestons upon which we have tried, wherever possible, to act. We are all in this together—especially all Conservative Members.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East for pointing out that, once again, even as I speak, the Opposition Benches are absolutely vacant. That is a disgrace. I can hardly castigate the Liberal party, however, because I agree that the contribution made by the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) was a good one. Unfortunately, he has had to leave, but he kindly apologised to me for having to return to the Isle of Wight. It is important to pay a warm tribute to him because he is retiring from the House today. I know that he has made a significant contribution to his local enterprise agency and has done much for small firms in his area.

I am also glad of the opportunity to pay a warm tribute to my hon. Friends the Members for Harrow, West (Sir J. Page) and for Norfolk, South-West (Sir P. Hawkins), both of whom made superb contributions to the debate and are leaving this distinguished House today.

I must congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King). Before I do so, it is significant and appropriate that you, Mr. Speaker, are now sitting in the Speaker's Chair. On this, the last day of the present Parliament, it is appropriate that you should be in your Chair in this debate, because I am conscious that this is the last day of your first, highly successful term as Mr. Speaker. It is appropriate because small businesses were your speciality when you were on the Back Benches, Mr. Speaker, and you still play an active part in the local enterprise agency in Croydon. Congratulations have been flying about today. I am determined that you will not be left out, Mr. Speaker. Once again, thanks are recorded for all that you have done for the small firms sector.

We should congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Northfield on his excellent contribution. I mean that. It was a first-class speech. Today we are talking about one of the most important subjects that we could ever discuss in the House. I am proud to say that since 1979 there have been dramatic changes affecting people running small businesses and those who might want to do so. Under the Government there has been a fundamental alteration in the climate for enterprise. That was the most important point that my hon. Friend made. The climate is the most important thing. It creates the conditions in which new and exising businesses can grow.

Peoples' attitudes have changed, so that wealth creation is now recognised as the vital process that it is, with profit as the proper reward for risk taking—the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent. There has been a substantial strenthening all round of the small firms sector.

Those changes have been achieved by overturning the high taxation, anti-industry approach that characterised much of the 1960s and 1970s especially the most recent Labour Administration. Small businesses have now been recognised as a source of innovation, vitality, wealth creation and job creation. The Government have been committed to ensuring that small businesses have a better chance of succeeding. However, that has not been achieved by the Government alone. It has needed the efforts of many other contributors to economic development—those who provide finance, advice and markets, and above all the individuals who provide the inspiration and drive that are necessary for business success.

The single most important factor contributing to the resurgence of small businesses has been the creation of the right macro-economic conditions. That has been the principal part of the Government's economic approach. Conditions of low inflation, sustained growth and lower taxation have given the certainty that industry needs. There is now encouragement for entrepreneurs to seize the opporuntities that are available to them and there are incentives for investors to take the risks involved in making finance available for those projects. Of course, those economic conditions benefit not just small businesses. They have encouraged industry as a whole and have brought about a position in which United Kingdom industry is expanding on a broad front.

Another aspect of the Government's policy that has benefited large and small firms alike has been the removal of red tape and regulation that has discouraged and stifled others. Last week we published a progress report entitled "Encouraging Enterprise", as well as a glossy version, "Lightening the Load", which I hope is a darn sight easier to understand. This is the third chapter in what will be a long-running novel. We have now had two White Papers. The first was "Lifting the Burden" and the second was "Building Businesses . . . Not Barriers". It is important that we should not lose the momentum of the deregulation initiative. I welcome the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West made this very point. There is still too much bureaucracy, which is acting as a brake on the enterprise of the people whom we are seeking to encourage.

[Mr. David Trippier]

Another aspect of the Government's policy, which is important and has been touched on by other of my hon. Friends, is the consultation process that we have introduced since we have been in power. We have been involved in many consultations with business, listening to what business considers to be the biggest problems that it faces. We have been in consultation with the European Community, where special action is being taken to create a favourable environment for businesses, including the control and reduction of administrative burdens on business. It is important to say to my hon. Friends that we started that initiative in Europe because we started the deregulation and simplification initiative over here. Europe has now started to follow our example. It is not only a case of looking at what is going on the statute book over here that might be creating problems downstream for the important people whom we are trying to encourage, but there are problems with legislation that might be coming over the water — from Brussels and the European Commission. Such things might creep up on us and create problems downstream for those important people, the small business men and women in this country.

It is important that we should get across the message about what we have done about planning. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent made an important point concerning trying to convert premises in rural areas. He has taken a special interest in this, and he knows full well that he has my support. It is important that we should change the regulations for use planning orders. They have been brought up to date and many other changes have been made or are under discussion. There has been a major review of VAT policy towards small businesses. In the Budget statement, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor announced measures to ease the burden that VAT places on small businesses. These may include a system of cash accounting, annual VAT returns and simplified procedures for registration and deregistration.

Individual entrepreneurs play an important part in our history, a point made effectively by my hon. Friends the Members for Northfield and Mid-Kent. Over a long time, the role of the entrepreneur and the importance of entrepreneurial attitudes have been lost sight of, and that is what was going on in the 1960s and 1970s. As a result of the Government's policy of creating opportunities and giving the freedom to take advantage of those opportunities there has been a change of attitude in the United Kingdom. There has been a realisation that wealth creation is crucial to the achievement of the social objectives that we have set ourselves.

There is also recognition that jobs depend not on public sector spending but on soundly based businesses, and this is where I have to quarrel with the hon. Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George). I have to try to convince him —I suspect that I will not today—that, although we regard local authorities as important, we still think that they should be more part of a partnership at community level. If they are in the lead with small businesses, initially those businesses may not be so successful because many of the firms that we are trying to encourage to grow and develop regard Government—national or local—as the unacceptable face of bureacracy.

What we have learnt, and what I hope that the Opposition will learn, is that business men would rather listen to professional advice or advice from those in the industry than to Ministers like me, to my officials in the Civil Service, or, dare I say it, local government officers. If we do not know that by now, we shall never learn anything about the small firms sector. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that local authorities have an important role to play, but I question whether they should be the leading contributors.

The importance of the small firms to the economy is so vital that I do not understand why the Opposition Benches are so sparsely filled. Some 96 per cent. of all firms in the United Kingdom are small by the definition of the Bolton report. More than 80 per cent. of the 1·5 million businesses registered for VAT have a turnover of less than £250,000. However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East said, they employ only 25 per cent. of the total United Kingdom work force.

This is again where I have to quarrel with the hon. Member for Walsall, South, who made comparisons between the United Kingdom and the United States of America, where 50 per cent. of the work force is employed in small businesses. I have to try to convince him that, in times of international recession, when there is a large shake-out of labour—which we have seen as the country cannot be sheltered from an international recession— many large companies shed a tremendous number of jobs. One would have to set up an enormous number of small businesses to compensate in any way for the number of people who have tragically found themselves on the dole queue. There would be no difference between the hon. Gentleman and I on that.

What we have been saying, and my hon. Friends, particularly my hon. Friend the Member for Northfield, have put it well, is that small businesses are less vulnerable to the winds of change that blow during an international recession. As my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, South said, smaller businesses are quicker to adapt to new projects and processes and can change amazingly rapidly. Because of their flexibility, they are better able to withstand the recession, and that is an important point for the future.

It is all very well for Conservatives, including myself, to point out that this is the seventh successive year of growth, but we need fire prevention measures for the future. We do not want a repetition of the fire brigade exercise that was needed to reverse the trend that set in under the Labour Government when this country lost 100,000 self-employed. That is why we are concentrating so much on the small firms sector. In pointing out the specific assistance that has been given to small firms, however, I acknowledge that the Government are not the only player in the area. The Government's role cannot be that of supplier of all that small businesses need. It must be to encourage others to meet the need of small businesses, to fill gaps which otherwise would not be filled, and to withdraw from areas in which others are meeting the needs.

Since 1979, many more people have been given the opportunity to develop their own ideas and to benefit directly from their own hard work. That process has been encouraged by the dramatic reductions in personal taxation and the increased availability of local sources of advice, support and other facilities, as my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East so effectively pointed out. In 1979, 1·9 million people in the United Kingdom were classified as self-employed. By 1986, the figure had risen to 2·7 million and had increased as a proportion of overall employment. That is encouraging evidence of willingness to have a go at running businesses, many of which will succeed.

The motivation to become self-employed is different for different people. For some, it will be the desire to escape the restrictions of a large organisation. For others, it may be the wish to live by their own efforts and to be their own boss. The motivation may be financial, although for the vast majority it will mean in reality long periods of hard work to achieve success. We recognise, too, that self-employment may also be a worthwhile alternative to unemployment. Moreover, it is interesting to note that 40 per cent. of self-employed people employ others and that some 80,000 businesses owned by self-employed people have 25 or more employees. That is a welcome feature of this part of the labour market which can all too easily be overlooked.

The enterprise allowance scheme is the main Government measure designed to help unemployed people to start their own businesses. Since its introduction, more than 234,000 people have taken advantage of its support. The number of places available in 1987-88 will be more than 100,000 and in 1988-89 and subsequent years it will be 110,000. The success of businesses set up under the scheme has been particularly encouraging. Of those that received the full year's allowance, 61 per cent. were still in business at the three-year point. The scheme has also helped unemployed people to create jobs for others. Eighteen months after startup, more than 90 extra jobs had been created per 100 businesses trading.

During 1986, I asked the Manpower Services Commission to concentrate a little more on management training. This point, too, was brought out by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East. It is important because I am ashamed to acknowledge that only 1 per cent. of those who run and manage small businesses have undertaken any kind of management development training in the past five years. That must be wrong. In some cases we cannot do much about it, although we can try to entice people to become involved in management training courses. With the enterprise allowance scheme, however, we can make it mandatory for people to go on a short course. At this stage, I decided to introduce an awareness day which lasts virtually a full day to point up issues and business concepts which prospective self-employed people need to consider. The awareness days also emphasise the benefits of further management training, advice and counselling to whet people's appetites and to point out that they may be deficient in certain areas and may not be the greatest living experts on financial control, marketing, and so on.

Starter days are provided by a range of organisations including local enterprise agencies, professional training providers and colleges of further education. They will be supplemented by an increased number of follow-up visits from MSC staff. The enterprise allowance scheme has given opportunities to large numbers of unemployed people. It has been extended to meet the growing demand, to allow those whose first venture failed to have another go—I agree with what my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent said about that—and to extend it to other areas where support might usefully be given. The scheme has demonstrated above all just how many people, given the right encouragement and persistence, can make a success of their business.

Where does that process start? If one is trying to change the attitudes in the country, should we concentrate on the adults or should we start with people at school? If we were to start by changing the attitudes of people at school—that point was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Northfield—they would have a head start when they left school. That is why I have been particularly enthusiastic to try to help to develop the mini enterprise in schools scheme. That was launched initially by the Department of Trade and Industry when I was part of that Department and, although I have no direct responsibility for it now, I am anxious to support the Department of Trade and Industry's initiative along with its partnership with the National Westminister bank. The aim is to have 7,500 secondary schools with mini enterprise schemes in them by the end of this year. That is quite a target. I think that about 60 per cent. of schools will have either mini enterprises or young enterprises in them. The young enterprise scheme is based on a foundation, and my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent is quite an expert on that. All that is very important.

The Manpower Services Commission scheme, TVEI, referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East, starts at a much younger age where we are trying to encourage young people to take more work-related subjects. Part of the purpose of TVEI is that people should go through the experience of running a small business and making realistic business decisions. They learn how to put together a business plan and how to read a balance sheet. I was certainly denied that sort of education, as I suspect were most other hon. Members in the Chamber. That must be an advantage; it cannot be a disadvantage.

If we are to encourage more people to follow the entrepreneurial route and become employers of others rather than expect others to employ them, we need to develop TVEI, young enterprise and mini enterprise in schools. In my opinion, we should have been doing that 20 years ago, but, never mind, we are on to it now. We are getting enormous support, not only from the education sector but from organisations such as banks and other large companies which recognise the need to support such initiatives.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent spoke about training in general terms. He referred specifically to the fact that many employers in large and medium sized firms, and perhaps even small firms, regard training not as an investment but more as a cost. That is true. We certainly need to concentrate on that in the future with regard to small businesses. I put to him the point I have made in public outside the House on a number of occasions. If one cannot convince the management within small businesses that they have to invest in their own management development, how can one convince them that they have to invest in training for their work force? It must start at the top.

I have learnt a great deal from Sir John Egan, chairman of Jaguar. He is perhaps my constituency's most famous son. He was born and bred there and has risen to dizzy heights. He makes it mandatory for everyone, even on the lowest rungs of the managerial ladder, to take a fortnight out every year for training. If it cannot be done within a compressed fortnight, it can be done through a distance learning course and staggered. That goes from the bottom to the top and includes him. I wonder how many business

[Mr. David Trippier]

managers or owners of small businesses are aware of that and know the significant part he has played in turning that company round.

The quality of management is crucial in determining whether a business survives—for the smallest start-up, for the established small business or for a firm growing to 20, 30 or more employees. The failure to manage successfully will lead a business into serious difficulties sooner or later. The owner of a small business needs the ability to combine production management, personnel activities, marketing and finance while all the time attending to the overall health of the business. Therefore, we have been concerned to increase awareness in the value of business training and its take-up. We want managers to recognise that training is an investment, not an unnecessary cost. It is principally through the MSC that the Government make their contribution to supporting business training.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East explained what happened in September 1985 when the responsibility for small firms was transferred from the Department of Trade and Industry to the Department of Employment. That was a superb opportunity for us to bolt on to small firms what we want to do in training. As a result, there has been a significant change of direction within the MSC. Only recently I launched what I think could be the answer to the problems of trying to get small businesses more interested in their own management training. It is called the private enterprise programme. It is sufficiently flexible and, I hope, will be attractive to many companies. It will be delivered locally and, I hope, will reduce the failure rate of small firms. Far too often we talk about failure rates when we should talk about success rates.

The fact that we have established so many successful businesses in the past few years is a source of great pride to me. We can never afford to neglect the business sector. The Government have given great encouragement to it and have not been afraid to apply resources to it. We are proud of our record and the significant progress that has been made. I am certain that that success will prove to be a significant factor in the Government being returned to office on 11 June.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-seven minutes past One o'clock till Monday 18 May.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 11 May 1987

ENERGY

Private Coal Mines

14. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any plans to change the present arrangements under which private coal mines are licensed.

Mr. David Hunt: I have no such plans at present.

Water-based Generation

15. **Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the earliest date on which a Government commitment can be made to the Severn barrage; and if he will make it his policy to continue support for this and other water-based electricity generating proposals.

Mr. David Hunt: The work now in hand on the Severn barrage is aimed at reducing uncertainty on its likely costs and performance, assessing regional and environmental implications, and defining the further work that would be required to enable any decision to be made to proceed to construction. The present programme of work should allow this present phase to be completed towards the end of 1988.

My Department will continue support for further work on tidal barrages and other promising water-based electricity-producing renewable energy sources.

Coal-fired Power Stations

16. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the future effects on the economy in general from the recently announced new coal-fired power station building programme, in terms of potential jobs and new output; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: The CEGB has estimated that the two possible coal-fired power stations at West Burton and Fawley offer opportunities of work for 18,000 to 20,000 people in power plant manufacturing and other companies. The board does not expect to submit a formal application for consent to construct these stations until later this year.

Point of Ayr Liquefaction Plant

17. **Mr. Eadie** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on current progress on the construction of the coal liquefaction plant at Point of Ayr.

Mr. David Hunt: Construction of this British Coal plant is at an advanced stage, having started last year.

Coal Industry Dispute

18. **Mr. Orme** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the latest position with regard to the review conducted by the chairman of British Coal into the cases of miners sacked during the industrial dispute of 1984-85.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have nothing to add to the statement made by the chairman of the British Coal Corporation on 1 April, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Coastal Erosion

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Energy what studies his Department has made of the longer-term effects on coastal erosion as a consequence of North sea oil production operations.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: My Department has conducted no studies in this area.

PRIME MINISTER

Middletown, County Armagh

Mr. A. Cecil Walker asked the Prime Minister what was the date of her most recent visit to security forces at Middletown, County Armagh.

The Prime Minister: The date of my most recent visit was 23 December 1986.

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. O'Brien asked the Prime Minister, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) on 18 December, *Official Report*, columns 612-613, if she will make a statement on progress on detailed planning in relation to nuclear accidents.

The Prime Minister: I hope to make a further statement soon.

Northern Region

Mr. Fallon asked the Prime Minister whether she will pay an official visit to the northern region.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Acts of Parliament

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Prime Minister if she will list the titles of Acts of Parliament, given Royal Assent since May 1979, which have not been fully implemented.

The Prime Minister: Acts of Parliament given Royal Assent since May 1979 and which have not been fully implemented are listed below:

1980

c.30	Social Security
c.51	Housing
c.62	Criminal Justice (Scotland)

1981

c.12	Water
c.36	Town and Country Planning (Minerals)
c.43	Disabled Persons
c.49	Contempt of Court
c.56	Transport

1982

c.20	Children's Homes
c.23	Oil and Gas (Enterprise)
c.24	Social Security and Housing Benefits
c.44	Legal Aid
c.48	Criminal Justice
c.49	Transport
c.53	Administration of Justice

1983
c.13 Merchant Shipping
c.18 Nuclear Material (Offences)
c.25 Energy
c.35 Litter
c.41 Health and Social Services and Social Security Adjudications

1984
c.12 Telecommunications
c.14 Anatomy
c.33 Rates
c.42 Matrimonial and Family Proceedings
c.46 Cable and Broadcasting
c.48 Health and Social Security
c.54 Roads (Scotland)
c.55 Building
c.57 Co-operative Development Agency and Industrial Development
c.60 Police and Criminal Evidence

1985
c.6 Companies
c.23 Prosecution of Offences
c.37 Family Law (Scotland)
c.42 Hospital Complaints Procedure
c.47 Further Education
c.53 Social Security
c.54 Finance
c.58 Trustee Savings Banks
c.61 Administration of Justice
c.67 Transport
c.73 Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland)

1986
c.10 Local Government
c.11 Gaming (Amendment)
c.14 Animals (Scientific Procedures)
c.17 Drainage Rates (Disabled Persons)
c.21 Armed Forces
c.23 Safety at Sea
c.28 Children and Young Persons (Amendment)
c.33 Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation)
c.38 Outer Space
c.39 Patents, Designs and Marks
c.41 Finance
c.44 Gas
c.49 Agriculture
c.50 Social Security
c.53 Building Societies
c.55 Family Law
c.56 Parliamentary Constituencies
c.58 European Communities (Amendment)
c.59 Sex Discrimination
c.60 Financial Services
c.61 Education (No. 2)
c.62 Salmon
c.63 Housing and Planning
c.64 Public Order
c.66 National Health Service (Amendment)

1987
c. 9 Animals (Scotland)
c.11 Gaming (Amendment)
c.12 Petroleum
c.13 Minors' Contracts
c.14 Recognition of Trusts
c.15 Reverter of Sites.

Air Pollutants

Dr. David Clark asked the Prime Minister whether there has been co-ordination of research between the Department of Health and Social Security and the Department of the Environment since 1980 regarding the direct and indirect human health implications of the air pollutants associated with acid deposition; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Close links have been maintained between the Department of Health and Social Security and the Department of the Environment on the development of research projects and on the assessment of available information on possible health implications of air pollutants associated with acid rain, both before and since 1980. In particular, the DHSS committee on medical aspects of the contamination of air, soil and water co-ordinates research in this area; members of the committee include experts from university departments and research organisations, with officials from Government Departments, including the Department of Environment, as observers.

Cable and Wireless plc

Mr. Douglas asked the Prime Minister if she will announce what further steps Her Majesty's Government will take to assist Cable and Wireless plc to receive serious and detailed consideration of its proposals for KDD International Telecommunications Network under Japanese law.

Mr. Michael Marshall asked the Prime Minister if, when attending the Venice summit, she will draw to the attention of the Prime Minister of Japan early-day motion 803, entitled "Action in Response to Japanese Trade and Investment Restrictions", and to the large number of hon. Members' signatures appended to it; and if she will reaffirm to the Japanese Prime Minister Her Majesty's Government's commitment to supporting the claims of Cable and Wireless plc for transparent and objective consideration of its proposals and feasibility studies as part of the Japanese/United States/United Kingdom consortiums' application for an international telecommunications licence.

The Prime Minister: Her Majesty's Government are following closely Cable and Wireless's bid, with its IDC partners, for a licence to operate international telecommunications services in competition with KDD. There is now no talk of discrimination against Cable and Wireless. Mr. Karasawa, the Japanese Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, has now for the first time made it clear that he would welcome a proposal for the laying of a new trans-Pacific cable. Commercial discussions on this issue are continuing in Japan and Her Majesty's Government will continue to assist Cable and Wireless in their efforts. I discussed the case with Mr. Tamura, the Japanese Trade Minister, when he was in London recently.

Northern Region

Mr. Fallon asked the Prime Minister (1) whether she will list government achievements in the northern region since 1983; and whether she will make a statement;

(2) whether she will list, by Government Department, the principal aid given to the northern region in each year since 1983.

The Prime Minister [*pursuant to her reply*, 5 May 1987, *c. 317*]: Since 1983 the northern region's dependence on its traditional industries has decreased and the industrial structure now includes an increasing proportion of sectors with good growth prospects. The Government will continue to support this transition by measures to encourage enterprise and competitiveness, combined with regional aid to foster and expand the industrial and commercial base of the north.

The Government's success in reducing inflation, in cutting taxes and borrowing, and in reducing burdens on business has helped to create seven years of steady growth in the national economy, which has been reflected in the north, as elsewhere. In the northern region, there are now 1,096,000 people in paid employment, 29,000 more than in 1983, and a further 107,000 self-employed, 16,000 up on 1983. Over 6,000 new businesses register for VAT each year.

Redundancies are 30 per cent. down on 1983 and vacancies are 79 per cent. up. Manufacturing investment rose by 57 per cent. in real terms between 1982 and 1985 (the latest year for which figures are available) and business confidence in the region is growing. Unemployment is now on a firmly downward trend standing at 15·7 per cent. compared with 16·8 per cent. in March 1986 and 16·7 per cent. in February 1983.

The contributions and achievements of the Departments of Trade and Industry, of Environment and Transport, and of Employment and the Manpower Services Commission are listed below together with a table setting out the aid provided to the region since 1983. The total amounts to almost £5 billion and demonstrates the Government's commitment to the region.

Information on the regional achievements and expenditure of other Government Departments is not immediately available.

Department of Trade and Industry

(*a*) Regional policy

The DTI has spent £555 million on regional aid to the North since April 1983, creating or safeguarding almost 74,000 jobs. Spending in 1986-87 was some 48 per cent. higher than in 1983-84.

The new package of regional incentives introduced in 1984 has increased the cost effectiveness of the assistance schemes by linking grant aid more closely to jobs created, and preventing the payment of large amounts of grant to highly capital intensive projects creating few if any jobs.

(*b*) Support for Innovation

The DTI has offered support totalling over £45 million since 1983 to encourage firms in the region to undertake innovative high technology R and D projects. This support has been buttressed by aid for firms needing expert advice on a range of technical design matters and for firms seeking to exploit the applications of technologies such as microelectronics, integrated circuits, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing technology.

The DTI has also helped the development of a range of new technology institutions covering areas such as applied R and D, technology transfer and improved education/industry linkages (for example the Newcastle technology centre, Mountjoy research centre, Durham, and the Middlesbrough cadcam centre.

The DTI has also supported the establishment by the region's universities and polytechnics of HESIN (higher education support for industry in the north). By these means, and other collaboration with industrialists and academics in key sectors of industry, there is active education/industry co-operation to the benefit of both.

A valuable example of private and public sector collaboration is the development by ICI and English Estates of a business and technology park at Belasis hall, Billingham, with an important element of Government financial support.

(*c*) Support for Small Businesses

DTI's programmes of regional and new technology support positively discriminate in favour of small firms. In addition DTI has provided £6·5 million of aid to small firms (supported by the European regional development fund) since 1983 under the business improvement services scheme. In 1986-87 alone over 600 small firms and agencies received help in the form of support for costs of business and marketing consultants, and for market research and assistance for new project feasibility studies.

(*d*) Support for Inward Investment and Regional Promotion

DTI has provided £3·5 million grant in aid to the North of England Development Council since 1983 in support of its efforts to encourage inward investment in the region. This has resulted in over 50 inward investment projects creating or safeguarding over 8,000 jobs, including the Nissan and Tabuchi projects.

The Government have also pledged a record £1·118 million to the newly formed Northern Development Company for 1987-88, which has a new partnership for regional self help between industry and commerce, the local authorities and the regional TUC, which has subsumed the NEDC. This funding represents over 40 per cent. of the total allocation to English regional development organisations and exemplifies Government willingness to play their part in the north by backing local efforts.

(*e*) Support for Exports

Northern region firms make full use of the range of Government export support services. In 1986 alone the BOTB in Newcastle held over 800 meetings with companies in the region many of which found first time exporting success while over 300 companies were assisted in visits to overseas markets.

(*f*) Support for Advanced Factory Building

English Estates has spent £58·8 million in the region since 1983 developing, managing and marketing industrial and commercial properties on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry. The northern region contains more than half of the English Estates premises and the creation of a new subsidiary in 1986, English Estates North, will allow the organisation to make a greater contribution to the development of the region by responding more effectively to its particular problems and needs.

The Department of the Environment and Department of Transport

Support for urban areas

(i) Urban Programme

The Department of the Environment continues to tackle the problems of the region's inner city areas through its urban programme (regional allocation for 1987-88 is £41·1 million). Over 1,000 projects in nine inner area districts in the north-east are currently being supported under this programme. These include assistance to industry, environmental regeneration and assistance to the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups.

(ii) Urban Development Grant

The Government have made extensive use of urban development grant to encourage private investment in the northern region. Since 1982 a total of 39 projects have been approved with £20 million of UDG supporting £81 million of private sector investment. These include industrial schemes, new housing, the establishment of rundown housing estates and retail developments, including the Gateshead metro centre, the largest out of town shopping complex in Europe.

(iii) Urban Development Corporation

Orders have been laid before Parliament for the designation of urban development corporations in Teesside and Tyne and Wear. Their role will be to inject resources to clear dereliction, provide infrastructure and attract private development. Chairmen for both UDCs have been appointed and consultants' reports on the development potential of the two areas are being placed in the Library today.

(iv) Gateshead Garden Festival

Work is well under way on the reclamation and development of the site for the 1990 national garden festival in Gateshead. Total Government investment in this project will be around £20 million.

Land reclamation

The Government have continued to provide substantial funding for land reclamation in the northern region through its derelict land programme. (Provisional regional allocation for 1987-88 is £19.3 million). Schemes funded under this programme have resulted in the clearance of some 940 hectares of derelict land since 1983.

Land registers

Since the land registers were first set up in 1981, some 2,100 hectares of publicly owned land in the northern region have been sold off or brought into use by the owners.

European regional development fund

In conjuction with local and other public authorities, the Government have been successful in securing the European Commission's approval for Two national programmes of Community interest in the northern region. The programmes, in Cleveland and Shildon, involve in total ERDF grant commitment of about £40 million in support of a range of measures to stimulate local economies.

Housing

The Government's home ownership programme is helping to widen the choice of tenure for many householders. Between December 1982 and December 1985 the proportion of owner occupiers has risen in the region from 51 per cent. to 55 per cent. This has been achieved through a variety of initiatives. Through the right to buy leglislation, over 24,000 homes have been purchased by tenants between April 1983 and June 1986. Over the same period, over 100 hectares of land have been released for the construction of starter homes. Again during the same period, partnership schemes between local authorities and private builders produced 215 houses for sale, schemes between local authorities and housing associations for inprovement for sale realised 187 dwellings, 319 unimproved houses were sold for improvement by the purchaser (homesteading) and a further 177 shared ownership sales have been completed.

Estate action

Estate Action (the urban housing renewal unit) was launched in 1985 to help tackle the problems of rundown and unpopular local authority housing estates by a variety of measures including improved management, physical improvements and the transfer of properties to other ownerships.

Nine local authorities in the northern region were granted additional resources through Estate Action for 19 schemes in 1986-87, including extra £6.472 million housing investment programme allocation and £0.495 million additional UP funding. A number of these projects will attract continuing support in 1987-88 and over 40 new proposals are currently under consideration.

Roads

Since 1983, £35·3 million worth of Department of Transport trunk road schemes have been completed in the region. A further £82·5 million of new trunk roads have been started since that date, the most significant of which is the Newcastle western bypass.

The recent White Paper on transport announced a further three new schemes for the region — the new dualling of the A1 north of Newcastle, costing £1·9 million and at Medall Meadows (£1·1 million) and also the construction of the A167 Durham western bypass costing £4·7 million.

Manpower Services Commission/Department of Employment

(*a*) Existing Employment Measures

Major developments in existing measures over the past four years include the expansion of work experience through the community programme and refocusing of voluntary projects programme to help long-term unemployed people.

(*b*) New Employment Initiatives

New initiatives launched since 1983 include the new workers scheme introduced from 1 April 1986 to increase job opportunities at realistic rates of pay for young people under 21 in their first year of employment, and the Restart programme, introduced nationally in July 1986 designed to help those who have been out of work for 12 months or more. Long-term unemployed people have been invited to a personal interview which seeks to guide the individual to one of the opportunties available including submission to a job vacancy, entry to a job club, a place in the new restart courses, entry to community programme or help with self-employment on the enterprise allowance scheme. At the end of March 1987 almost 111,000 interviews had been completed. Restart is being piloted for those unemployed for over six months.

The Middlesbrough task force was one of eight established in co-operation with five different Government Departments as a pilot scheme, the inner cities initiative, in February 1986. The aim of the Initiative is to improve the targetting, and enhance the benefit to local people, of the money channelled through existing central Government programmes in small inner city areas. The task forces were given a modest top-up budget to try out new approaches to the particular difficulties faced locally, and in particular to help to improve the opportunities for employment and self-employment for local people. They are working very closely with the private sector.

Because of the success the task forces have already had in creating partnerships between the public and private sector, and in creating job and training opportunities for local people, the Government announced on 27 April that they were extending the pilot scheme to a further eight inner-city areas, one of which will be Hartlepool.

(c) Small Firms Service

The Department of Employment assumed the responsibility for this service in September 1985. Inquiries from new businesses have been running at 20,000 per year for the four-year period and counselling sessions have more than doubled to almost 3,800 per year.

Advice and information are also available to small firms through the local enterprise agencies, jobcentres. The local enterprise agencies grant scheme has been administered by the regional enterprise unit and 16 agencies have received a total of £296,000 in 1986-87.

(d) Youth Training Scheme

During the four-year period, YTS has developed from a collection of short training courses through a full year of training and experience to a two-year programme of integrated training, education and experience. It is now a firmly established feature of the nation's training effort which will raise the basic skill level of the work force. Spending on this programme at £67·25 million is almost 30 per cent. higher than in 1984 and guarantees a training place for two years to every 16-year-old school leaver and one year to each 17-year-old. The region has 12 information technology centres offering training in computing and electronic assembly skills.

(e) Technical Vocational Education Initiative

The TVEI initiative aims to finance the development of a more relevant and career-related curriculum in schools and will be developed into a national scheme from autumn 1987. Funds have been made available over the period 1985-87 for the in-service training of teachers to promote developments particularly related to TVEI.

(f) Adult Training

Since 1983 the adult training strategy has been launched with the aim of encouraging more cost-effective training, relevant to labour market needs, for both employed and unemployed people. Over 33,000 people benefited from adult training schemes in 1986-87 compared with 5,413 in 1983-84, and spending doubled in the same period. Important new developments have included the Open Tech programme, and the development of open learning; local collaborative projects, funded jointly with the Department of Education and Science; Training for Enterprise, which helps small firms managers and the self-employed; and most recently the new job training scheme, which helps people out of work for more than six months to gain the training, practical experience and recognised vocational qualifications they need to compete for jobs. Access to the scheme is mainly through restart interviews and priority is given to 18 to 24-year-olds. It is expected that 13,000 opportunities will be available by March 1988.

(g) Tourism

Since 1982-83 the English tourist board has approved assistance totalling £2·6 million under Section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act to bring forward investment in capital tourism projects in the Northumbria tourist board area. Both the ETB and Northumbria tourist board have also actively been involved in initiatives to promote the expansion and development of tourism in the region, for example through the tourism development action programmes set up to co-ordinate strategies for tourism in Tyne and Wear and Kileder.

The regional enterprise unit for the north-east assumed responsibility for implementation of tourism policy in September 1985. The tourism co-ordination group, chaired by Department of Employment's regional director, was set up to consider the action points in the north-east tourism co-ordination report. It comprises all the major interest groups. It meets regularly and is evidence of the increasing co-operation between Government Departments, local authorities and the private sector, all of whom are becoming increasingly aware of the need to improve the north-east's share of the tourism market.

Interdepartmental action

In February 1985, the Government announced the formation of the Newcastle/Gateshead city action team, an initiative to focus and co-ordinate the programmes of DTI, DOE and the Department of Employment/MSC in the inner-city area. The three Departments liaise in analogous initiative in Cleveland through the Cleveland co-ordinating team; and they work with the local authorities and others in the south Tyneside industrial strategy committee, the Sunderland economic regeneration team, and in other more localised activities.

In May 1986 the city action team was allocated £1 million to spend on economic projects designed to stimulate job creation and enterprise in areas throughout the north-east affected by shipbuilding closures. A further £1 million has been made available for 1987/88. This funding, which supplements aid available through existing schemes, has provided a degree of flexibility important to bring forward desirable projects and support major initiatives such as the Burton's design works and important activities in other areas including marketing and new technology.

Also in response to shipbuilding redundancies, Government provided support of £5 million to British Shipbuilders to enable it to set up British Shipbuilders Enterprises Ltd. which has its headquarters in Cleveland. BSEL provides help in the way of retaining and replacement of redeployment of redundant workers and advice and assistance for those wishing to set up their own business. A further £1 million was made available in 1986-87 through the MSC specifically for training redundant shipyard workers.

Aid to the Northern Region[1] *by Government Department*

Department of Trade and Industry

(a) Regional Development Grants (RDG)

(i) Old Regional Development Grants[2] *(Payments)*

	£ million
1983-84	93·7
1984-85	89·2
1985-86	63·2
1986-87	81·0

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[1] North East Region and Cumbria.

[2] Figures for financial years cannot be provided in the time available for British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. and calendar year figures are included in totals.

(ii) New Regional Development Grants[1] (Offers)

	Grant offered £ million	Associated jobs
1984-85	2·3	846
1985-86	31·9	11,340
1986-87	58·6	18,389

[1] Scheme began in November 1984.

(b) Assistance under Section 7 of the Industry Act (Offers)

	Offer value £ million	Jobs created or safeguarded
1983-84	24·5	14,133
1984-85	56·7	13,579
1985-86	19·9	5,984
1986-87	35·0	9,600

(c) Assistance under Section 8 of the Industry Act (Offers)

	Offer Value £ million
1983-84	8·8
1984-85	5·7
1985-86	1·0
1986-87	1·9

(d) Support for Innovation (Offers)

	Offer Value £ million
1983-84	24·8
1984-85	9·3
1985-86	5·9
1986-87	5·4

(e) Business Improvement Services[1] (Offers)

	Offer Value £ million
1984-85	0·5
1985-86	2·9
1986-87	3·1

[1] Scheme began in November 1984.

(f) Support for North of England Development Council/Northern Development Company (Grant in Aid)

	Grant in Aid £ million
1983-84	0·9
1984-85	1·0
1985-86	0·8
1986-87	0·9
1987-88	[1]1·1

[1] To NDC.

(g) Capital Expenditure by English Estates

	£ million
1983-84	13·4
1984-85	17·9
1985-86	11·1
1986-87	16·4

Department of the Environment and Department of Transport

£ million

	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	(Provisional Allocation) 1987-88
Rate Support Grant	746·8	760·2	774·7	716·3	792·3
Housing Investment Programme	138·3	110·4	91·8	81·5	73·4
Urban Programme	39·9	36·9	44·9	45·2	41·1
Derelict Land Grant	14·0	14·0	15·5	18·0	19·3
Transport Supplementary Grant	31·3	27·2	10·5	10·0	10·7
Total	973·9	963·2	937·4	871·0	936·8

European Regional Development Fund (Infrastructure Grant) by Calendar year

	£ million
1983	32·4
1984	38·6
1985	15·9
1986	51·4

In addition, £20 million of Urban Development Grant, which is not allocated on an annual basis, has been approved.

New Trunk Road Schemes completed by the Government since 1983

	Northern Region	*£ million*
A1	Alnwick Bypass (Stage II)	3·7
A1	Belford Bypass	3·3
A1	Berwick-upon-Tweed Bypass	9·6
A66	Darlington Bypass	5·9
A69	Bardon Mill Bypass	2·0
A69	Cross Lane GSJ	2·3
A69	Steenhouse Diversion	3·0
A69	Team Valley GSJ	2·7
A596	Levens Bridge Diversion	4·8
Total		35·3

New Trunk Road Schemes started by Government since 1983 and now under construction

		£ million
A1	Clifton-Stannington improvement	3·1
A69	Eighton Lodge Junction improvement	5·6
A69	Newcastle Western Bypass	72·3
A596/595	Thursby Bypass	1·5
Total		82·5

Manpower Services Commission/Department of Employment

Programme	1983-84		1984-85		1985-86		1986-87	
	Volume	Spend £ million	Volume	Spend £ million	Volume	Spend £ million	Volume	Spend £ million
Vacancies notified	101,896	n/a	111,851	n/a	125,559	n/a	132,956	n/a
Placings	85,665	n/a	97,184	n/a	101,410	n/a	112,030	n/a
Community programme	13,037	53·96	14,652	64·81	23,148	101·0	30,767	137·23
Voluntary projects programme	1	0·16	17	0·729	25	0·92	25	1·15
Enterprise allowance scheme	2,151	4·209	2,992	6·05	3,727	7·576	5,137	10·382
Community industry	1,523	3·638	1,339	3·633	1,433	3·534	1,451	3·845
Job release	7,105	n/a	6,396	n/a	4,852	n/a	3,257	n/a
Young workers scheme	7,771	n/a	4,559	n/a	5,426	n/a	[1]436	n/a
New workers	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,680	n/a
Job split scheme	[2]67	n/a	23	n/a	53	n/a	39	n/a
YTS	29,516	n/a	30,523	52·0	31,544	53·838	39,441	67·26
Adult training	5,413	8·435	7,616	14·28	18,625	13·686	33,040	16·324
Local collaborative projects	—	—	13	0·41	15	0·387	14	0·647
Restart	—	—	—	—	—	—	110.802	—
Jobstart	—	—	—	—	—	—	718	—
Jobclubs	—	—	83	n/a	317	n/a	1,867	n/a
City action team projects	—	—	—	—	—	—	17	1·0
Regional enterprise unit	—	—	—	—	—	—	16	0·296
Task force Opportunities/projects	—	—	—		—	—	400	0·87
Small firms service enquiries	21,405	n/a	17,978	n/a	19,885	n/a	20,660	n/a
Counselling sessions	1,720	n/a	2,730	n/a	3,242	n/a	3,778	n/a

[1] Northern region (excluding Cumbria) together with Yorkshire and Humberside Region.

[2] Figure covers from January 1983 to end March 1984.

Spend Sub-regional figures on spend not available.

WALES

Beekeeping Centre, Brecon

Mr. Livsey asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will provide funds to keep open the Welsh Beekeeping Centre at Colig Howell Harris, Brecon; and if he will make it his policy to seek to obtain support from the European Community for this project.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: There are no Welsh Office funds available for this purpose, nor would the centre appear to qualify for European Community support, although I understand the Welsh Beekeepers Associaton has been exploring the position with the European Commission.

Chernobyl Disaster

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make available to farmers in Wales, hit by the Chernobyl radiation cloud, a guaranteed price for the sale of their farms if they should want to sell and find it difficult because of the effects of the radiation ban on the marketability of their farm.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to the hon. Member for Copeland on 30 April at column *216* by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Singleton Hospital

Mr. Williams asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he received a formal application from the West Glamorgan health authority for the approval of an accident and emergency specialist post for the casualty service at Singleton hospital; when the Welsh Medical Manpower Committee last met; when it will meet again; and what would be the annual cost of appointing an accident and emergency specialist.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Department was asked to give approval to the West Glamorgan health authority's proposal to establish a new consultant post in accident and emergency which would include responsibility for the Singleton hospital minor casualty unit in a letter dated 28 January 1987. In a letter of 9 March to the authority, the Department emphasised that as a new post the proposal would have to be put to the Welsh Medical and Dental Manpower Committee and that in that context a job description for the post would be required.

The Welsh Medical and Dental Manpower Committee last met on 7 April, and is next scheduled to meet on 7 July.

The total annual cost of a consultant may include his or her salary, the employer's on-costs, and the cost of support staff, equipment and facilities and accommodation. These will vary from post to post according to the circumstances. The Department has not received information about the detailed costings for the post in question. The salary scale for a full-time consultant as recommended by the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration will be £25,440 to £32,840 from 1 April 1987.

Redundancies

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many redundancies were reported to his Department in each of the years since 1979 in the constituency of Alyn and Deeside;

(2) if he will list the number of redundancies in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* each of the counties of Wales and *(c)* each of the travel-to-work areas of Wales notified to his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Notified redundancies are not available on a constituency basis. I am informed by the Manpower Services Commission that the numbers of notified redundancies for Wales, Welsh counties, and Welsh travel-to-work areas since 1979 are as follows:

County	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
South Glamorgan	n/a	n/a	3,699	3,104	1,988	1,557	1,664	742
Mid Glamorgan	n/a	n/a	7,289	5,111	5,063	2,576	3,691	1,584
West Glamorgan	n/a	n/a	8,225	4,401	2,488	2,255	2,093	2,587
Gwent	n/a	n/a	5,345	5,066	2,943	2,435	3,002	2,208
Dyfed	n/a	n/a	6,168	3,756	930	1,063	1,148	1,385
Powys	n/a	n/a	634	181	91	nil	692	54
Gwynedd	n/a	n/a	982	976	750	719	213	468
Clwyd	n/a	n/a	4,090	2,052	1,788	1,136	2,524	874
Wales	11,663	45,215	36,432	24,647	16,041	11,441	15,027	9,902

TTWA	*1979*
Aberdare	155
Bargoed	349
Blaenau Ffestiniog	64
Caernarvon	327
Cardiff	1,609
Denbigh	20
Ebbw Vale	1,241
Holyhead	94
Llandudno	120
Llanelli	925
Llanrwst	11
Machynlleth	24
Merthyr Tydfil	660
Milford Haven	866
Monmouth	48
Neath	1,166
Newport	1,271
Newtown	58
Pembroke Dock	179
Pontypool	193
Pontypridd	1,331
Port Talbot	778
Pwllheli	325
Rhyl	67
Shotton	167
Swansea	1,061
Wrexham	469

TTWA	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Aberdare	1,556	553	744	717	834
Aberystwyth	47	48	16	nil	38
Bargoed	879	926	687	1,098	200
Barmouth	nil	44	nil	nil	nil
Blaneau Ffestiniog	nil	nil	6	12	nil
Brecon	nil	nil	nil	20	nil
Caernarvon	2,163	363	520	607	616
Cardiff	3,160	4,350	3,366	2,146	1,760
Cardigan	27	nil	nil	nil	nil
Carmarthen	95	58	98	279	78
Colwyn Bay	183	263	152	162	204
Denbigh	nil	nil	nil	51	nil
Ebbw Vale	1,007	1,385	1,648	322	258
Fishguard	17	nil	nil	nil	nil
Holyhead	362	483	408	105	11
Lampeter	39	4	nil	nil	nil
Llandeilo	28	nil	nil	nil	nil
Llandrindod Wells	nil	13	nil	50	nil
Llanelli	3,063	2,654	1,249	261	619
Llangollen	28	88	31	22	nil
Llanrwst	nil	nil	30	nil	nil
Machynlleth	nil	nil	[illegible]	nil	nil
Merthyr Tydfil	1,111	1,733	1,132	493	278
Milford Haven	678	1,741	244	346	98
Monmouth	79	95	385	28	52
Neath	775	1,936	602	583	451
Newport	5,831	2,394	1,735	2,156	1,236
Newtown	154	517	181	21	nil
Pembroke Dock	622	1,663	2,149	44	230
Pontypool	2,572	1,292	1,142	401	576
Pontypridd	3,074	2,422	1,324	1,471	871
Port Talbot	6,937	3,622	3,079	1,980	408
Pwllheli	53	nil	nil	nil	22
Rhyl	322	161	136	97	41
Shotton	7,629	2,498	812	823	661
Swansea	3,042	3,870	1,850	1,087	1,599
Tenby	30	nil	nil	nil	nil
Tywyn	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Welshpool	72	104	nil	nil	nil
Wrexham	2,171	1,172	921	659	300

TTWA	*1985*	*1986*
Aberdare	869	261
Aberystwyth	12	24
Bangor and Caernarfon	125	102
Brecon	nil	54
Bridgend	981	536
Cardiff	1,743	742
Cardigan	nil	nil
Carmarthen	16	499
Conwy and Colwyn	161	87
Denbigh	nil	nil
Dolgellau and Barmouth	24	13
Ebbw Vale and Abergavenny	536	332
Fishguard	nil	nil
Haverfordwest	58	71
Holyhead	23	292
Lampeter and Aberaeron	nil	nil
Llandeilo	nil	43
Llandrindod Wells	33	nil
Llanelli	749	517
Machynlleth	nil	nil
Merthyr and Rhymney	1,185	953
Monmouth	nil	nil
Neath and Port Talbot	1,045	1,275
Newport	1,424	836
Newtown	659	nil

TTWA	*1985*	*1986*
Pontypool and Cwmbran	550	573
Pontypridd and Rhondda	1,069	301
Porthmadog and Ffestiniog	nil	nil
Pwllheli	nil	24
Shotton, Flint and Rhyl	1,637	317
South Pembrokeshire	313	231
Swansea	1,048	1,312
Welshpool	nil	nil
Wrexham	767	507

Notes:

(1) Since January 1981 statistics of notified redundancies have been recorded by the month in which the redundancies are scheduled to occur and not by the month of notification as in previous years. For this reason it is not possible to make valid comparisons of statistics from 1981 onwards with those of previous years, nor should figures for 1981 and earlier years be added together as there is some element of duplication involved.

(2) Because of the different methods of calculating redundancies prior to 1981, the TTWA figures for 1979 and 1980 will not match the published figures for the Wales Region.

(3) Insufficient information is available for the period prior to 1981 to enable county notifications to be given.

(4) The figures should not be regarded as comprehensive. The Employment Protection Act 1975 requires that the Secretary of State for Employment be notified when an employer intends to make 10 or more workers redundant within a period of 30 days or less; or intends to make 100 or more employees redundant over a period of 90 days or less. Redundancies on a small scale are therefore omitted.

(5) Since January 1981 redundancies of seasonal workers have not been included in the statistics.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Opposition Parties (Financial Assistance)

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Lord Privy Seal how much money has been paid to *(a)* the official Ulster Unionist party and *(b)* the Ulster Democratic Unionist party (i) from November 1985 to March 1986 inclusive and (ii) from April 1986 to March 1987 inclusive, under the terms of the resolution of the House relating to financial assistance to opposition parties.

Mr. Biffen: The information is as follows:

	Period November 1985 to March 1986	*Period April 1986 to March 1987*
	£	£
Ulster Unionist Party	8,328·00	20,065·00
Ulster Democratic Unionist Party	2,828·75	6,788·75

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police (Hampshire)

Mr. Stephen Ross asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to accede to the request from the Hampshire police authority for an increase in its establishment of 23 officers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Friend will consider this application, which was made on 14 April, in the light of advice of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and together with other applications which are outstanding for 1987-88. I shall let the hon. Member know the outcome in due course.

Immigration

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the action taken by police and immigration officers in conducting raids to arrest numbers of suspected illegal entrants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: I have received recent representations only from the hon. Member for Bradford, West himself.

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total number of passengers granted temporary admission in 1986; and how many of these subsequently absconded.

Mr. Waddington [*pursuant to his reply,* 10 April 1987, c. *421*]: In 1986, a total of 12,414 passengers were given temporary admission pending further examination and 10,757 were given temporary admission following refusal of leave to enter. Some passengers were included in both categories. Many passengers given temporary admission in the latter part of 1986 were not required to report back until the early months of 1987, but the number of passengers recorded in 1986 as having failed to comply with the conditions of temporary admissions was 1,161.

Traffic and Litter Offences (London)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been brought during each of the past three years by the Metropolitan police in respect of *(a)* parking offences, *(b)* bus lane offences and *(c)* litter dropping.

Mr. David Mellor: I will reply as soon as possible.

Drink-Driving

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make arrangements similar to those planned for the detection of road fund licence offences by means of roadside checks in the London area for the detection of excess alcohol offences.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: Within the powers provided by the legislation, the steps taken to enforce the law on drinking and driving are a matter for individual chief officers of police.

Prisoners (Dialysis)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if there are any plans for the inmate of Wandsworth prison now receiving dialysis treatment to be given a kidney transplant;

(2) for how long the present private dialysis treatment now being given to an inmate of Wandsworth prison is planned to last;

(3) how many prison officers escort the inmate from Wandsworth prison for dialysis treatment; how many hours are involved in this work per week; and what is the total cost;

(4) who gave permission for an inmate at Wandsworth prison to receive private dialysis treatment; what is the weekly cost of this treatment; and who is responsible for paying for it.

Mr. Mellor [*pursuant to his reply,* 29 April 1987]: After prison medical staff, and a consultant nephrologist, confirmed that the inmate, a foreign national who has been sentenced to nine years' imprisonment for illegal importation of drugs, was in urgent need of dialysis private treatment was authorised by prison department officials as a short term emergency expedient.

Dialysis equipment will shortly be available at Wandsworth prison and when the installation work has been completed and the necessary training in its use given (which, it is estimated, will take about six weeks), the present arrangements will be discontinued. There are no plans for a kidney transplant.

The weekly charge for the treatment, which has been borne on the prisons Vote is £350. A prison officer and hospital officer have been accompanying the prisoner for his treatment twice a week; and the estimated total weekly cost of the escort, which has lasted about eight hours on each occasion, has been £200.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

VAT (Alcoholic Beverages)

Mr. Sims asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Chislehurst on 12 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *261*, he can now report on the outcome of the Government's representations to the Greek authorities and the European Commission on the discriminatory rates of value added tax applied to certain alcoholic beverages.

Mr. Alan Clark: At our request, the European Commission has pursued this with the Greek authorities and is considering possible infraction proceedings in the European Court. We will continue to insist on early action to remove any discrimination against United Kingdom exports of spirits to Greece.

National Space Plan

Mr. Stephen Ross asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a substantial increase in the budget for the British national space plan.

Mr. Pattie: The Government are presently considering the British national space plan and hope to come to a decision soon.

Rolls-Royce

Mr. Cash asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about the allocation of shares in the Rolls-Royce offer for sale.

Mr. Channon: A total of 2·025 million applications (including applications from eligible employees and pensioners of Rolls-Royce) were received for 3,145·9 million shares. 801,470,588 shares were available under the offer.

The basis of allocation will be as follows:

Public applications

Number of shares applied for	*Number of shares allocated*
400-1,000	150
1,500-2,000	200
3,000-5,000	250
6,000-7,000	300
8,000-10,000	350
15,000	425
20,000-100,000	[1]2·5

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[1] Percentage of the number applied for.

No allocation will be made in respect of applications in excess of 100,000 shares.

Applications from employees and pensioners of Rolls-Royce

A maximum of 10 per cent. of the total number of shares offered were reserved for the preferential offers of shares to eligible Rolls-Royce employees and pensioners. Over 43,700 employees and pensioners applied for more than 77·2 million shares on special preferential application forms. All valid applications received in the free, matching and discount offers will be met in full. The employee allocations under the priority offer (which includes allocation under the discount offer) and the pensioner allocations will be as follows:

Number of shares applied for	*Number of shares allocated*	
	Employees	*Pensioners*
Up to 4,000	in full	in full
5,000	4,750	5,000
5,882	n/a	5,400
6,000	5,350	5,400
7,000	5,700	5,450
7,058	5,700	n/a
8,000	5,700	5,450
9,000	5,750	5,500
10,000	5,750	5,500
15,000	5,850	5,600
20,000	5,850	5,600
25,000	5,925	5,675
30,000	6,000	5,750
35,000	6,125	5,875
40,000	6,250	6,000
45,000	6,375	6,125
50,000	6,500	6,250
60,000	6,750	6,500
70,000	7,000	6,750
80,000	7,250	7,000

To the extent that any application under the employee and pensioner offers is not met in full, the excess will be rounded down to the nearest public application denomination, and an additional allocation will be made on that excess, as if it were a general public application. These additional allocations are included, where appropriate, in the above table.

United Kingdom institutional placing

473·8 million shares (approximately 59 per cent. of the offer) were placed with United Kingdom institutions. Because the offer was more than twice subscribed, the shares placed with United Kingdom institutions were reduced by approximately 79 million, which were made available to the public and eligible employees and pensioners of Rolls-Royce.

Holiday Ownership Exchange

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from persons who have lost money as a result of the activities of a time-share company, Holiday Ownership Exchange of Leicester Square, London, details of which have been sent to him; if he proposes to take any action in response to these representations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: I have received one written representation and my Department has had several inquiries by telephone. The Department has made widely available its leaflet entitled "Your Place in the Sun" which gives a checklist of steps to take before entering into a timeshare transaction and advises people what to do if things go wrong. The enforcement of consumer protection legislation is generally a matter for local authority trading standards departments. I understand that the City of Westminister has received some 150 complaints about the activities of holiday ownership exchange and they are considering these matters in relation to the powers vested in them.

British National Space Centre

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will make a statement concerning funding of the British National Space Centre.

Mr. Pattie: The Government are presently considering proposals for future space funding put forward by the British National Space Centre and hope to reach a decision soon.

Leyland/DAF

Mr. Terry Davis asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether there is going to be an increase in the number of British directors of the Leyland/DAF joint venture as a result of the discussions following the debate in the House on 11 March.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Rover Group and DAF are continuing to discuss the matter.

A330/A340 Projects

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he is now prepared to increase the Government's contribution to the A330/A340 projects.

Mr. Pattie: The Government's discussions with British Aerospace about the amount of launch aid for the airbus A330 and A340 projects have reached an advanced stage and it is hoped that an agreement will soon be reached.

Komatsu (Hydraulic Excavators)

Sir Hugh Rossi asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to the answer of 6 May, *Official Report*, column 418, about hydraulic excavators, what information is available to his Department about the quantity and value of components imported by Komatsu in any recent period.

Mr. Alan Clark: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Regional Aid (Humberside)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been made available, and to how many firms, in regional aid to industry in *(a)* the Grimsby travel-to-work area, *(b)* South Humberside and *(c)* Humberside entire in each year since 1978.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Figures for the four main components of regional aid to these areas are as follows:

(1) Old regional development grants: payments over £25,000 1978-87

	Amount paid (£000's)
(a) Grimsby travel-to-work area	
1978-79	1,855
1979-80	1,315
1980-81	2,137
1981-82	3,307
1982-83	2,308
1983-84	2,517
1984-85	3,806
1985-86	1,219
1986-87	4,136
(b) South Humberside	
1978-79	4,968
1979-80	2,467
1980-81	4,705
1981-82	6,597
1982-83	12,046
1983-84	11,441
1984-85	11,469
1985-86	4,117
1986-87	7,895
(c) Humberside	
1978-79	11,355
1979-80	6,304
1980-81	10,321
1981-82	18,152
1982-83	19,988
1983-84	16,539
1984-85	16,222
1985-86	7,171
1986-87	11,264

New regional development grants: value of grants offered 29 November 1984—31 March 1987

	Number of Offers	*Amount offered (£000's)*
(a) Grimsby Travel to Work Area	Nil	Nil
(b) South Humberside:		
1984-85	2	130
1985-86	142	7,552
1986-87	276	8,587
(c) Humberside	as for South Humberside, at *(b)* above	

Regional selective assistance: offers 1978-87

	Number of Offers	*Amount offered (£000's)*
(a) Grimsby travel to work area		
1978-79	6	187
1979-80	3	49
1980-81	6	267
1981-82	2	18
1982-83	4	117
1983-84	6	528
1984-85	4	61
1985-86	10	5,301
1986-87	5	90
(b) South Humberside		
1978-79	7	124
1979-80	3	49
1980-81	8	302
1981-82	11	900
1982-83	19	922
1983-84	19	2,320
1984-85	17	1,712
1985-86	13	5,649

	Number of Offers	Amount offered (£000's)
1986-87	12	3,955
(c) Humberside:		
1978-79	28	1,403
1979-80	24	548
1980-81	28	1,688
1981-82	18	1,584
1982-83	32	1,807
1983-84	42	5,020
1984-85	37	12,379
1985-86	28	6,310
1986-87	26	4,441

European regional development fund: specific measures for the steel and fisheries industries under business improvement services 26 November 1984—31 March 1987

	Number of offers	Amount offered £000's
(a) Grimsby travel to work area		
26 November 1984—31 March 1985	3	38
1 April 1985—31 March 1986	41	298
1 April 1986—31 March 1987	149	810
(b) South Humberside		
26 November 1984—31 March 1985	17	82
1 April 1985—31 March 1986	83	809
1 April 1986—31 March 1987	185	1,124
(c) Humberside		
26 November 1984—31 March 1985	39	336
1 April 1985—31 March 1986	149	1,367
1 April 1986—31 March 1987	484	4,269

Brooke Marine (Grants)

Mr. John Smith asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of any Government grants paid to Brooke Marine, Brooke Yachts, Brooke Marine International and Brooke Marine Holding within the last two years.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Department of Trade and Industry has not paid any grants to any of these companies within the last two years.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what moneys are owed by his Department to the London residuary body in respect of Greater London council activities prior to abolition.

Mr. Butcher: I will reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Takeovers (Review)

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the review of the regulation of takeovers that he announced on 28 January to be concluded.

Mr. Channon: The review has now been concluded. It was carried out by officials from my Department, the Treasury and the Bank of England, together with representatives of the Securities and Investments Boards, the stock exchange and the panel on takeovers and mergers. The review group identified a number of measures which will strengthen the regulation of takeovers. These are listed below. The measures will improve the monitoring and investigative capabilities of the takeover panel, adding further to the arrangements already made with the Stock Exchange to use the latter's new information systems. The measures will make available the sanctions of the Securities and Investments Board and recognised self-regulating organisations, and they will require authorised investment businesses to co-operate with inquiries and investigations carried out by the panel. In addition, they will facilitate and improve co-operation between regulators, and we have today made an order under section 180 of the Financial Services Act and section 449 of the Companies Act designating the panel to receive regulatory information whose disclosure is restricted by statute.

A consultative document will be published shortly about changes to law proposed by the review group.

The appointments of a new chairman and two new deputy chairmen of the panel have already been announced and further appointments will be made when the new regulatory regime under the Financial Services Act is in place.

These steps bring the panel into a closer relationship with the regulatory arrangements established by the Financial Services Act. I believe this provides for effective and flexible regulation of takeovers.

MEASURES IDENTIFIED IN THE REVIEW

Integration with the financial services regulatory structure: sanctions for breaches of the Take-over Code

1. The Securities and Investments Board, if designated, and recognised self-regulating organisations will be able to use their sanctions against investment businesses that breach the code.

2. The SIB, if designated, should encourage recognised investment exchanges to adopt rules requiring member firms to comply with the rules and rulings of the panel, or enabling disciplinary action to be taken against a firm on the basis of a panel finding alone.

3. The stock exchange should consider whether there is scope, in its role as "competent authority for listing", for supporting the panel further than it does already through the listing rules applying to issuers under section 153 of the Financial Services Act.

4. The SIB, if designated, and relevant SROs should adopt "cold-shoulder" rules requiring investment businesses not to act for persons who the businesses have reason to believe will not comply with United Kingdom practice and standards in takeovers.

Integration with the financial services regulatory structure: investigative powers

5. The SIB, if designated, and relevant SROs should adopt rules requiring investment businesses to co-operate with the panel in inquiries and investigations.

6. The Secretary of State and the SIB, if designated, will where appropriate use their statutory investigative powers in relation to breaches of the code.

7. The panel should be designated under financial services and companies legislation to receive regulatory information whose disclosure is restricted by statute.

8. The existing machinery for co-operation between regulators will be extended to include the panel and will keep under review the development of co-operation on the regulation of takeovers.

Member of the panel

9. In addition to the recent appointments of a new chairman and two new deputy chairmen, the Governor of the Bank of England and the panel intend to change the panel's composition in the following ways:

(a) The Securities Association and the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation, if recognised as SROs, are to become member organisations.

(b) One more named individual (in addition to the chairman and deputy chairmen) is to be appointed by the Governor as a further non-representative member.

(c) When appointing named individuals, including the chairman and deputy chairmen, the Governor will bear in mind the desirability of maintaining the present cross-membership with SIB.

The Companies Act, the Takeover Code and the Stock Exchange listing rules

10. The stock exchange and the Department are to undertake further work to establish ways in which companies could be permitted to prevent the voting at general meetings of shareholdings of which the ultimate voting control is not disclosed. The panel is considering ways in which it might prevent such shareholdings from influencing the outcome of an offer.

11. The five-day deadline allowed by the Companies Act for disclosure of interests of 5 per cent. or more should be reduced if consultation confirms it is practicable. The panel is examining whether the disclosure deadline in the code should be amended to require parties to the offer and their close associates to disclose dealings immediately in normal circumstances and, in any event, by 9 am the following business day, instead of noon the following business day as at present.

12. A number of improvements might be made to the powers enabling restrictions to be imposed on the exercise of rights attached to shares (including voting and transfer rights) when inquiries by a company into the ownership of the shares under section 212 of the Companies Act prove unsuccessful. These include any necessary clarification of the circumstances in which a company may apply to the court for an order restricting the rights, and the possible inclusion in the Act of a specific deadline for responses to inquiries. For those companies that have taken the power through their articles to restrict rights themselves (without the need to apply to the court) when section 212 inquiries are unsuccessful, the stock exchange might reduce the 28-day period of notice that is required before the rights may be restricted.

13. The Companies Act provisions on concert parties should be clarified and steps should be taken to ensure that the law is better understood. The panel proposes to amend the code to make it clear that its provisions are different from those of the Act and that panel rulings on the code do not constitute legal guidance on the interpretation of the Companies Act.

14. The Department is considering whether the Companies Act prohibition of the giving of financial assistance for the purchase of own shares needs to be strengthened or clarified.

15. The Department and the panel are examining, in co-operation with the Bank of England and the stock exchange whether dealings by those associated with parties to a takeover, even when disclosed as required by the code, can distort the market, whether any additional restrictions should be imposed on such dealings and the effect of any such restrictions.

16. The panel proposes to amend the code to include a reference to the application of section 47(1) of the Financial Services Act to takeover documents and to include a more prominent reference to the provision of legislation on insider dealing.

Buy British

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what Her Majesty's Government are doing to encourage companies, in both private and public sectors to use their purchasing power to buy goods produced in the United Kingdom and at the same time assist the export potential through the achievement of a greater customer base.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The Government encourage purchasers in the public and private sectors to recognise that in seeking best value for money they should use their commercial power to enhance the ability of suppliers to compete in home and overseas markets. In the field of public procurement, the Government have issued guidance which sets out best purchasing practices and my Department is promoting this with public bodies under the public purchasing initiative. We welcome and support efforts by private sector organisations such as Industry Matters, Better Made in Britain and the Think British campaign to highlight the benefits to purchasers of having a strong supplier base close at hand and the action they can take to achieve this. In addition, my Department offers a wide range of practical help to companies wishing to improve their productive efficiency and the quality, design and marketing of their goods.

Pinewood Film Studios

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will receive a deputation from the work force of Pinewood film studios to discuss the proposed loss of over 250 permanent jobs there; if, in the light of the redundancies at Pinewood studios and the decline in British feature film production, he will review the operation of the Films Act 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The Government regret that Pinewood has had to announce redundancies. It would not be appropriate for the Government to intervene in a commercial decision taken by the company, but I am always ready to discuss constructive proposals about the future of the industry. However, I do not consider it necessary to review the operation of the Films Act 1985.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Parades and Demonstrations

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those parades and demonstrations which took place between 17 and 22 April inclusive; in respect of which of these the required seven days notice was not given to the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary; if he will identify which were Loyalist and which Republican; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Police records indicate that a total of 38 parades and demonstrations took place between 17 and 22 April in respect of which seven days' notice was not given; they do not show the affiliation of the organisers of these events.

Birds (EEC Directive)

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list for Northern Ireland those sites which have been identified as meeting the criteria for designation under the EEC birds directive as special protection areas and under the Ramsar convention; when these sites will be designated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Land Reclamation

Miss Maynard asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will state the total expenditure by way of grant aid on land reclamation in the Province, the area of land which has been reclaimed, and the number of farmers or landowners who have benefited, in respect of each of the years 1980 to 1986, under each of the following schemes (1) the farm capital grant scheme; (2) the farm and horticulture development scheme; (3) the agriculture and horticulture grant scheme; (4) the agriculture and horticulture development scheme; and (5) the agriculture improvement scheme (EC).

Mr. Needham: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Terrorism

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his reply of 22 April, *Official Report*, column 580, how many of the recent murders considered to have been carried out by competing factions of the Irish National Liberation Army led to the deaths of individuals who had formerly been charged with scheduled offences but subsequently released.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 May c. *392*]: As I explained in my reply to my hon. Friend. I am not prepared to speculate on the motives behind terrorist murders. I cannot, therefore, provide the information sought.

EMPLOYMENT

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

67. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received regarding the quality and quantity of staff employed by the nuclear installations inspectorate.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I shall write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

"Action for Cities"

Mr. Spearing asked the Paymaster General to which bodies or persons he has sent his free booklet, "Action for Cities", and when a copy was sent to the Library and to hon. Members whose constituencies are affected by its contents.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The booklet has been sent to a wide range of interested groups including local authorities; professional organisations; voluntary bodies; churches; police forces; national and local press; construction companies; banks; building societies; and architects. Copies were also sent to the city action teams and inner city task forces for wider distribution to local people. Copies were sent to the Library on 6 May and a copy was sent on 7 May to each hon. Member representing a constituency in England.

Mr. Spearing asked the Paymaster General where, and in whose premises the press conference on the subject, "Action for Cities" was held on 28 April; and which hon. Members were invited to, or informed of, the event.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The "Action for Cities" presentation was held at the Limehouse studios, Canary wharf, in London's docklands. The House was informed of this in my statement on 27 April.

Restart

Mr. Hawksley asked the Paymaster General how many people were invited to attend jobcentres in Telford for the restart programme up to 31 March; how many attended; and if he will categorise the offers made.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General what is the advertising budget, split by type of media, for the promotion of the job training scheme; what proportion is aimed at potential trainees; and what proportion is aimed at potential employers.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Labour Statistics

Ms. Clare Short asked the Paymaster General what is his latest estimate of the number of full-time jobs lost and part-time jobs gained between 1979 and the latest available date.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: We have no means of estimating accurately job losses and job gains.

However, between June 1979 and December 1986, the latest date for which comparable figures are available, there was a net decrease in the size of the full-time employed labour force in Great Britain of 1,359,000.

In the same period there was a net increase in part-time employment of 719,000. Since 1983, however, the employed labour force has grown by 1,130,000.

Dr. David Clark asked the Paymaster General if he will list the number of redundancies in the northern region notified to his Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Trippier: Information relating to confirmed redundancies is given in the following table:

Redundancies confirmed as due to occur in Northern Region

Year	*Numbers*
1979	14,985
1980	33,276
1981	40,103
1982	32,424
1983	30,274
1984	25,727
1985	24,834
1986	19,471

Newham

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Paymaster General if he will publish a table giving the number of people in each Department of Health and Social Security office area in Newham who have been refused entitlement to benefit *(a)* for failing the eligibility for work criteria, and *(b)* following a restart interview in the most recent period of 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: No one can lose their benefit entitlement solely as a result of a restart interview. It has always been a requirement, under long-standing legal rules adopted by successive Governments, that claimants to unemployment benefit must ask to demonstrate that they are available for work. Decisions about entitlements in individual cases are and always have been the responsibility of independent statutory adjudicating authorities.

The number of claims disallowed on the grounds that the claimant was not available for work by the Barking and Leyton centralised adjudication offices, which cover Newham and surrounding areas, for the 12-month period up to 31 December 1986, was 1,223.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Paymaster General if he will state the number of young people on various training schemes in Newham North-West constituency, based on the most recent statistics available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: In the Newham local authority district, which includes the constituency of Newham, North-West, at 30 April 1987, there were 309 young people in training on YTS schemes.

I am encouraged by the success of YTS. It is now fully established as a high quality training programme offering young people valuable work experience and training and increased opportunities to obtain recognised vocational qualifications.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Paymaster General what moneys are currently owed by his Department to the London residuary body in respect of Greater London council activities prior to abolition.

Mr. Lee: No central record is kept of my Department's non-statutory financial liabilities under contract to individual local authorities.

Nuclear Safety

Mr. Proctor asked the Paymaster General if, in the light of the recommendations by Sir Frank Layfield in the report of the Sizewell public inquiry concerning further work to be undertaken by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate, he will indicate that discussions he has arranged with the director general of the Health and Safety Executive on the resources implications of such further work; when he expects to be informed of such resource implications; if he will publish a report of the potential resources implications; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: I met the director general of the Health and Safety Executive on 1 April 1987 to discuss the resource implications of the recommendations by Sir Frank Layfield concerning further work to be undertaken by the nuclear installations inspectorate. I do not intend to publish a report on the resource implications but I am satisfied that the necessary work can be carried out. The Health and Safety Executive intends to mount a recruitment exercise which will shortly be announced.

Age Concern Scheme, Stourbridge

Mr. Winnick asked the Paymaster General why the Manpower Services Commission has reduced the funding of the Age Concern scheme in St. John's Centre Stourbridge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: Organisations applying for community programme funding have to show all the income expected to be generated by projects together with other non-Manpower Services Commission moneys which may be available to them. This information is needed so that decisions may be made both about viability and the appropriate level of MSC funding.

Stourbridge Age Concern declined to provide this information and its application to continue the project could not, therefore, be considered.

HFW Plastics, Gateshead

Mr. Clelland asked the Paymaster General what financial support is being given to HFW Plastics of Gateshead by his Department, and for what reason.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The Manpower Services Commission does not provide any direct financial support to HFW Plastics. The organisation is, however, a work experience provider for a YTS managing agent. Under this arrangement the firm may be allocated one YTS trainee at any one time. Any financial arrangements between the YTS managing agent and the firm are the responsibility of the two parties.

Mr. Clelland asked the Paymaster General what was the nature of the involvement of the Manpower Services Commission in the recent recruitment of workers at the HFW Plastics of Albany road, Gateshead.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: Gateshead jobcentre was notified of 50 vacancies by HFW Plastics on 1 April. The vacancies were withdrawn by the employer on 3 April. No job seekers were sent to the company by the jobcentre during the short period when the vacancies were open.

Restrictive Check Valves

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Paymaster General if his Department has made or received any estimate of the cost to the United Kingdom construction industry of the reduced performance which would result from the fitting of restrictive check valves to construction equipment as required by CON(LO) 1981-82; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: No. I am advised that valves which are properly designed and fitted should not significantly reduce the performance of the equipment.

Competition

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Paymaster General (1) if he will make a statement on the background to the case currently being heard by the Fair Competition Committee in Brussels which refers to the anti-competitive implications of the United Kingdom proposal contained in CON(LO) 1981-82 which deals with the use of excavators as cranes;

(2) if he will make a statement outlining the case which Her Majesty's Government will be putting forward in Brussels in support of condition 6 of CON(LO) 1981-82 when the matter is considered by the Fair Competition Committee.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: I refer my hon. Friend to the replies which my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State gave on 14 and 15 April 1986 at column 855.

The certificate of exemption No. CON(LO) 1981-82 is not subject to the notification requirements imposed by EEC directive 83/189. It is therefore not a matter for formal consideration by the committee to which my hon. Friend refers. However, the matter is being formally discussed by that committee and with representatives of appropriate trade associations in this country.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

School Furniture

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the report prepared by his Department and the Furniture Industry Repair Association on the state of school furniture.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The report referred to is a working draft of a paper for discussion between the Department, the Furniture Industry Research Association, the British Educational Equipment Association and representatives of the local authorities.

The work described in the draft paper is leading to revisions to existing British standards. The intention is to publish the final version of the paper when the work is complete.

School Leavers (Avon)

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of school leavers in Avon stayed on in full-time education after the minimum school leaving age for each year since 1980.

Mr. Dunn: Information is not available in the form requested. The percentage of school leavers in Avon who, during the academic year, left the sixth form, or at the minimum school leaving age intending directly to pursue their full-time education elsewhere, was:

Academic year	*Percentage*
1979-80	37·7
1980-81	37·7
1981-82	47·0
1982-83	45·2
1983-84	42·5
1984-85	42·9

Source: School leavers survey. Data subject to sampling error.

Foreign Languages

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps his Department is taking to seek to stop the decline in foreign language teaching in British schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: Foreign languages are among the subjects proposed for inclusion in the foundation curriculum for all pupils during the compulsory period of secondary schooling. Last year we issued for consultation a draft statement of policy on foreign languages, which was warmly received. It called for action by the education service to promote increased take-up of foreign language study throughout secondary schooling, a wider choice of languages offered, and greater emphasis on communication skills. We intend to issue the final statement shortly.

Shortage Subjects

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of his measures to improve the supply of secondary teachers in the shortage subjects of mathematics, physics and technology.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: There is compelling evidence that significant progress is being made. While there has been an estimated 5 per cent. increase in vacancies overall, early local authority unfilled vacancy returns for January 1987 show estimated falls of 16 per cent. for maths, 18 per cent. for physics and 10 per cent. for craft, design and technology. Meanwhile, applications in 1987 for initial teacher training this September are up 14 per cent. overall and in mathematics, physics and CDT they have increased even more—by 42 per cent., 80 per cent. and 99 per cent. respectively.

Further Education

Mr. Peter Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what proportion of staff in non-advanced further education are on the grade *(a)* lecturer I and *(b)* lecturer II;

(2) what proportion of lecturers in non-advanced further education hold degreess or equivalent qualifications.

Mrs. Rumbold: Centrally available information on lecturers' qualifications identifies the establishments where they work, not the level of the courses they teach. Establishments can be classified according to the proportion of students undertaking non-advanced courses. About two thirds of those students are in establishments where all but a small minority of students are on such courses. In England in 1985, the latest year for which information is available, 41 per cent. of full-time lecturers in those establishments were recorded as having degrees or equivalent qualifications. In the same year, 48 per cent. of all full-time lecturers in those establishments were on the lecturer I grade and 30 per cent. were on the lecturer II grade.

Mr. Peter Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of work in non-advanced further education is *(a)* O-level equivalent, category V, and *(b)* A-level equivalent, category IV.

Mrs. Rumbold: In the academic year 1985-86, 43 per cent. of timetabled student hours in non-advanced further education in England were spent in Burnham category V work and 51 per cent. in Burnham category IV work. The remaining 6 per cent. of non-advanced work was Burnham category II-III.

Mr. Peter Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the ratio of students to staff in non-advanced further education in terms of full-time equivalent numbers.

Mrs. Rumbold: The ratio of full-time equivalent student numbers to full-time equivalent staff numbers in non-advanced further education in England in the academic year 1985-86 was 10·3 to 1. The survey upon which this is based covers about three quarters of non-advanced work in the maintained sector.

Mr. Peter Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of non-advanced further education students study at colleges outside the boundaries of their own local education authority.

Mrs. Rumbold: In November 1985, 13 per cent. of the students in non-advanced further education from England attended English further education colleges outside their home local authority area.

School Closures

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many proposals for closure of schools he has before him; if he will break the figures down between primary and secondary; how many are classified as small rural schools; how long each individual proposal has been before him; and when he expects to make a decision.

Mr. Dunn: Excluding special schools, there are currently before my right hon. Friend proposals to close 108 schools; 64 of these are primary and 44 secondary. The records do not show how many of these might be classified as small rural schools.

The table shows the date of publication of notices for each individual proposal. My right hon. Friend has undertaken to reach decision on proposals of this kind within six months wherever practicable.

Name of Local Education Authority	*Brief description of proposal*	*Date of publication*	*Schools identified for closure*
Staffordshire	Closure of a Junior School and change Age Range of an Infant School to 4-11	21 June 1985	Kinnersley Memorial CE Junior School
Rochdale	Reorganisation of RC provision in Rochdale	28 September 1985	St. Wilfrid's RC Midddle School St. Joseph's RC Middle School
Kirklees	Closure of West Slaithwaite CE Junior and Infant School	30 September 1985	West Slaithwaite CE Junior and Infant School
Hertfordshire	Amalgamation of Howe Dell Junior and Infant School and Millwards Junior School	11 October 1985	Howe Dell Junior and Infant School
Warwickshire	Closure of Ullenhall CE Junior and Infant School	2 May 1986	Ullenhall CE Junior and Infant School
Warwickshire	Closure of Baddesley Clinton RC Junior and Infant School	2 May 1986	Baddesley Clinton RC Junior and Infant School
Warwickshire	Closure of Wolverton Junior and Infant School	2 May 1986	Wolverton Junior and Infant School
Berkshire	Reorganisation of Primary Education in West Reading	23 May 1986	Grovelands Infant School Norcot Primary School Upcroft Junior School
Staffordshire	Reorganisation in the Stafford Area	13 June 1986	Flash Ley First School Bradley Endowed First School Gnosall St. Lawrence First School Chetwynd Middle School Holmcroft Middle School Riverway Middle School Hixon Broadacres Middle School
Essex	Secondary Reorganisation in Essex	16 May 1986	Buckhurst Hill High School Epping Forest High School Ongar Comprehensive School
Dorset	Closure of Halstock Primary School	20 June 1986	Halstock Primary School
Oxfordshire	Closure of King Alfred's Secondary Boarding House School	12 June 1986	King Alfred's Boarding House School
Hampshire	Closure of Sherfield English CE Primary School	12 September 1986	Sherfield English CE Primary School
Oxfordshire	Closure of Kiddington Primary School	8 August 1986	Kiddington Primary School
Wiltshire	Amalgamation of Burbage Primary School, Easton Royal Primary School and Grafton CE Primary School	15 August 1986	Burbage Primary School Easton Royal Primary School Grafton CE Primary School

Name of Local Education Authority	*Brief description of proposal*	*Date of publication*	*Schools identified for closure*
Cambridgeshire	Amalgamation of Colville Primary School and Tydd St. Giles Primary School	11 September 1986	Colville Primary School
Gloucestershire	Closure of Colwell Secondary School, Hucclecote Secondary School, Linden Secondary School and Longlevens Secondary School	3 September 1986	Colwell Secondary School Hucclecote Secondary School Linden Secondary School Longlevens Secondary School
Cheshire	Closure of Marbury Primary School	29 August 1986	Marbury Primary School
Hampshire	Amalgamation of Ramsdell Primary School and Monk Sherborne Primary School	5 September 1986	Ramsdell Primary School
Hampshire	Primary Reorganisation in Winchester	8 August 1986	Weeke Infant School Harestock Junior School
Hampshire	Reorganisation of Secondary Schools in Havant	10 September 1986	Oak Park Secondary School
Gloucestershire	Closure of Coates CE Primary School	17 October 1986	Coates CE Primary School
Berkshire	Closure of Altwood CE Secondary School	12 September 1986	Altwood CE Secondary School
Oxfordshire	Closure of Shellingford CE Primary School	9 October 1986	Shellingford CE Primary School
Somerset	Amalgamation of Watchet First School and St. Decuman's CE First School	24 October 1986	Watchet First School St. Decuman's CE First School
Dudley	Dudley reorganisation	23 October 1986	Yew Tree Hill First School Brockemoor Fist School Jession's CE First School The Blue Coat CE Secondary School
Durham	Closure of Greenfield Comprehensive School	14 November 1986	Greenfield Compresensive School
Surrey	Primary reorganisation in West Molesey	6 August 1986	Joseph Palmar First School Hurst Park First School
Durham	Amalgamation of King James I Comprehensive School and Bishop Barrington Comprehensive School	14 November 1986	King James I Comprehensive School
Norfolk	Closure of Felthorpe First School	28 November 1986	Felthorpe First School
Dorset	Amalgamation of Baden Powell Middle School and St. Peter's CE Middle School	21 November 1986	St. Peter's CE Middle School
Buckinghamshire	Closure of Burnham Grammar School	14 November 1986	Burnham Grammar School
Buckinghamshire	Closure of Evreham Secondary	14 November 1986	Evreham Secondary School
Buckinghamshire	Amalgamation of the Raans Secondary School and Brudenell Secondary School	14 November 1986	The Raans Secondary School
Buckinghamshire	Amalgamation of Cestreham Secondary School and Lowndes Secondary School	14 November 1986	Cestreham Secondy School
Suffolk	Closure of Whepstead Primary School, Chedburgh CE Primary School, Cherrington CE Primary School and Horringer CE Primary School and Establish a new primary school	19 January 1987	Whepstead Primary School Chedburgh CE Primary School Cherrington CE Primary School
Suffolk	Closure of Shimpling CE Primary School	19 January 1987	Shimpling CE Primary School
Suffolk	Closure of Eastgate CE Primary School	19 January 1987	Eastgate CE Primary School
Suffolk	Closure of Ingham Primary School	19 January 1987	Ingham Primary School
Suffolk	Closure of Hepworth CE Primary School	19 January 1987	Hepworth CE Primary School
Suffolk	Closure of Ickingham CE Primary School	19 January 1987	Ickingham CE Primary School
Suffolk	Closure of Little Bealings Primary School	19 January 1987	Little Bealings Primary School
Suffolk	Closure of Charsfield CE Primary School	19 January 1987	Charsfield CE Primary School

Name of Local Education Authority	*Brief description of proposal*	*Date of publication*	*Schools identified for closure*
Lincolnshire	Closure of Wilsford Myers CE Primary School	22 January 1987	Wilsford Myers CE Primary School
Lincolnshire	Closure of Scredington Primary School	22 January 1987	Scredington Primary School
Lincolnshire	Closure of Foston CE Primary School	23 January 1987	Foston CE Primary School
Lincolnshire	Closure of East Barkworth CE Primary School	23 January 1987	East Barkworth CE Primary School
Lincolnshire	Closure of Thorpe St. Peter's Primary School	23 January 1987	Thorpe St. Peter's Primary School
Lincolnshire	Amalgamation of All Saints CE/Methodist Primary School and St. Mary's CE Primary School	23 January 1987	St. Mary's CE Primary School All Saints CE/Methodist Primary School
Lancashire	Amalgamation of Everton High School and Shadsworth High School	23 January 1987	Everton High School
Derbyshire	Amalgamation of Ilkeston Secondary School and Cantelupe Secondary School	16 January 1987	Cantelupe Secondary School
Oxfordshire	Amalgamation of Milham Ford Upper School and Oxford Upper School	23 January 1987	Oxford Upper School
Cornwall	Closure of Trethosa Primary School	28 January 1987	Trethosa Primary School
Norfolk	Closure of Halvergate Primary School and change Age range of Cantley Primary School	30 January 1987	Halvergate Primary School
Norfolk	Amalgamation of South Walsham Primary School and Upton with Fishley Primary School	30 January 1987	Upton with Fishley Primary School
Wiltshire	Amalgamation of Enford CE Primary School and Netheravon with Fittleton CE Primary School	26 February 1987	Enford CE Primary School Netheravon with Fittleton CE Primary School
Dorset	Closure of Sherborne Foster's Grammar School and Lord Digby's Grammar School and enlarge St. Adhelm's CE Secondary School	6 March 1987	Sherborne Foster's Grammar School Lord Digby's Grammar School
Cambridgeshire	Closure of Turves Primary School	27 March 1987	Turves Primary School
Staffordshire	Reorganisation in Burntwood	27 March 1987	Burntwood First School Boney Hay First School Ridgeway First School
Berkshire	Amalgamation of Larchfield Infant and Junior Schools	27 March 1987	Larchfield Infant School
Salop	Amalgamation of Croeswylan Secondary School and Fitzalan Secondary School	11 March 1987	Fitzalan Secondary School School
Derbyshire	Secondary Reorganisation	23 January 1987	Parkfield Secondary School Breaston Weston Mare Secondary School Hatton Secondary School
Haringey	Closure of The Somerset Secondary School	5 March 1987	The Somerset Secondary School
Walsall	Closure of St. Mary's RC Primary School	8 April 1987	St. Mary's RC Primary School
Avon	Amalgamation of Axminster Secondary and Colyton Secondary Schools	3 April 1987	Axminster Secondary School
Leicestershire	Amalgamation of Bourton Vale Secondary and Westwoods Secondary Schools	3 April 1987	Westwoods Secondary School
Leicestershire	Amalgamation of Marshalwick Secondary and Wheathampstead Secondary Schools	3 April 1987	Wheathamstead Secondary School
Essex	Closure of St. Cedd's RC Secondary School	3 April 1987	St. Cedd's RC Secondary School
Hertfordshire	Amalgamation of Bishop Hatfield Secondary and Hatfield Secondary Schools	3 April 1987	Bishop Hatfield Secondary School
Hertfordshire	Closure of Halsey Secondary School	3 April 1987	Halsey Secondary School
Hertfordshire	Amalgamation of Alleyne's Secondary and Stevenage Secondary Schools	10 April 1987	Stevenage Secondary School
Hertfordshire	Closure of Bishopslea Secondary School	3 April 1987	Bishopslea Secondary School

Name of Local Education Authority	*Brief description of proposal*	*Date of publication*	*Schools identified for closure*
Hertfordshire	Amalgamation of Margaret Dane Secondary and Hadham Hall Secondary Schools	10 April 1987	Hadham Hall Secondary School
Befordshire	Amalgamation of John Howard Upper and Pilgrim Upper Schools	30 April 1987	Pilgrim Upper School
Lincolnshire	Secondary reorganisation	9 April 1987	Sturton-by-Stow Secondary School

Expenditure

Mr. Knox asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how much was spent per pupil in primary schools *(a)* in England as a whole and *(b)* in Staffordshire in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what were the comparable figures in 1978-79, at constant prices;

(2) how much was spent per pupil in secondary schools *(a)* in England as a whole and *(b)* in Staffordshire in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what were the comparable figures in 1978-79, at constant prices.

Mr. Dunn: The information requested is given in the following table:

Net institutional recurrent expenditure

(£—1985-86 real terms[1])

	1978-79	*1985-86*
Primary schools—England	690	[2]805
Primary schools—Staffordshire	695	815
Secondary schools—England	1,000	[2]1,175
Secondary schools—Staffordshire	1,005	1,125

[1] The cash figures for 1978-79 have been repriced to 1985-86 prices using the Gross Domestic Product (Market Prices) Deflator.

[2] Provisional.

Medical Research Council

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) of 30 April, *Official Report*, column 199, and to the reply of the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey of 16 March, *Official Report*, column 345, if the Medical Research Council will now allocate funds in response to the current application for continued funding from the team at Edinburgh University researching vulnerability to meningocci; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) on 7 May at column 520.

Capitation

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will list capitation allowances in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in each local education authority in each financial year from 1979-80 to 1986-87.

Mr. Dunn: The Department does not collect this information.

SCOTLAND

Arts (Support)

68. **Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in Scotland.

69. **Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in Scotland.

Mr. John MacKay: None.

GP Patient Lists

Mr. McTaggart asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* such information as is available to him on the discrepancies between general practitioners' patient lists and the population figures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: Information on general practitioners' patient list sizes in relation to population figures is as follows.

The list size figures, which are provisional and are as at 1 October 1986, are taken from information provided by health boards to the Common Services Agency of the National Health Service. The population figures are taken from provisional estimates by the General Register Office (Scotland) and are as at 30 June 1986.

Discrepancies between list sizes and population figures arise from a number of factors including the time taken to record the transfer of a patient who moves from one health board area to another and that involved in notifying the death of a patient and the subsequent removal of that patient's name from the appropriate list.

Health board	*List size*	*Population*
Argyll and Clyde	459,805	445,328
Ayrshire and Arran	397,967	374,814
Borders	104,914	101,804
Dumfries and Galloway	151,814	146,770
Fife	351,838	343,825
Forth Valley	290,903	271,819
Grampian	510,301	502,850
Greater Glasgow	1,068,906	959,839
Highland	204,308	200,764
Lanarkshire	589,407	564,604
Lothian	802,820	741,910
Orkney	19,369	19,266
Shetland	22,559	23,580
Tayside	417,467	392,346
Western Isles	31,424	31,494
Scotland	5,423,532	5,121,013

Trunk Road Improvements

Sir Hector Monro asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state the expenditure on trunk road improvements in each of the last five years in Nithsdale, and Annan and Eskdale district councils, respectively; and what is the forecast expenditure in the next five years, scheme by scheme.

Mr. Rifkind: Records of trunk expenditure are not maintained by district and the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The following information relates to Dumfries and Galloway region.

Financial Year	*Expenditure on New Construction and Improvements £ million*
1982-83	7·181
1983-84	5·590
1984-85	11·263
1985-86	11·110
1986-87	8·793

Schemes costing over £1 million in progress	*Forecast Expenditure in next five years £ million*
A75 Bridge of Dee Diversion	0·355
A75 Annan Bypass	12·870
A75 Ringford Bypass	1·700

Schemes costing over £1 million expected to start in the next five years		*Total Estimated Cost*[1] *£ million*
A701	Ae Bridge	1·010
A75	Carrutherstown to Hetland	2·150
A75	Castle Douglas Bypass	3·880
A75	Dervaird Loch to Barlae	2·440
A75	Dumfries Bypass	10·350
A75	Dunragit Bypass	2·820
A75	Glenluce Bypass	3·800
A75	Halfway House to Shennanton	2·360
A75	The Glen Improvement	4·700
A76	Carronbridge Bypass	1·280
A76	Kirkconnel and Sanquhar Bypass	6·560

[1] Start dates for trunk road schemes are subject to a number of uncertainties, including the satisfactory completion of statutory procedures. No confident estimate can therefore be given for the portion of expenditure on these schemes falling in the period to 31 March 1992, and total scheme costs are given instead.

In addition to the forecast expenditure on major schemes, there will be some expenditure on smaller improvements costing less than £1 million, but the amount cannot be predicted at present.

Dumfries Bypass

Sir Hector Monro asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what progress is being made in the preparations of the Dumfries bypass; and when he expects the contract to be let.

Mr. Rifkind: Discussions are taking place to try to resolve outstanding objections to the draft trunk road orders, which were published in November 1986. A draft compulsory purchase order will be published this summer. If the statutory procedures can be completed without the need for a public local inquiry, I would expect the contract to be let in summer 1988.

Fishery Protection Patrols

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what contingency plans he has for the operation of long-range fishery protection patrols in the event of his Department's recently acquired Fokker F27-200 not being available for service on or after 1 July.

Mr. John MacKay: As in the past, if the normal offshore aircraft were to be unavailable appropriate cover would be provided. This would be either the back-up provided by the operating contractors for the Fokker F27 or the DAFS Cessna Titan which could perform an offshore role with its primary inshore task undertaken by a chartered aircraft.

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what arrangements he has made for hangar accommodation for his Department's recently acquired long-range fishery patrol aircraft at Turnhouse airport; what is the cost of this arrangement; who owns the hangar; and what steps he took to seek to obtain such accommodation at a lower cost.

Mr. John MacKay: The provision of suitable hangarage is the responsibility of the company who will operate the Fokker F27-200. This was made clear to tenderers, and their arrangements are contained in the tender proposals now being scrutinised.

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what professional advice he obtained concerning the specification and choice of a fishery patrol aircraft and radar equipment for his Department; if he will name the consultant employed for this purpose and summarise that consultant's relevant qualifications, experience and business associations; and if he will place in the Library a copy of the specification and timetable for the supply of this aircraft and radar which was given to prospective tenderers.

Mr. John MacKay: Professional advice has been and continues to be provided by Capt. John Michie who is a fellow of the Aeronautical Society and a past chairman of the Association of British Aviation Consultants. Capt. Michie is a graduate of Glasgow university and was a captain with Scottish Airways; during the Second World War he served in atlantic ferry command and RAF transport command. Post war he was employed by KLM as flight superintendent, North Atlantic and pilot member of the research and development unit. Subsequently he was with British Eagle as general manager. During his active flying career he held British, Canadian and Netherlands airline transport pilot licences and was a delegated type-rating and instrument-rating examiner. Further professional advice has been forthcoming from other relevant Departments and from the Civil Aviation Authority on matters concerning the acquisition of the Fokker F27-200. I do not consider it appropriate to place a copy of the acquisition tender in the Library.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for each ward the unemployment figures for the latest month available in the Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath benefit office area; and if he will show for each ward the rise or fall since June 1983.

Mr. Lang: As there is no functional relationship between district ward boundaries and the location of unemployment benefit offices, the information requested is not available.

Details of the number of unemployed claimants living in each electoral ward within Kirkcaldy district and Dunfermline district (which includes Cowdenbeath) for June 1983 and February 1987 were contained in the reply I gave to the hon. Member on 26 March at column *249-50*.

Tourist Board

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the expenditure by the Scottish Tourist Board for each year since 1983 at home and overseas and also details of total expenditure by area tourist boards and other agencies on promoting tourism in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Health Service Staff (Pay)

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much of the cost of the pay increase for health service staff in Scotland will be met from the contingency reserve; what proportion of the cost this represents; and how that figure compares with the equivalent figure for England and Wales.

Mr. John MacKay: In her statement on 23 April about pay increases for those covered by review body recommendations, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that an extra £328 million would be provided from the reserve to assist health authorities to meet the cost of the awards. £36 million of this amount has been allocated for the NHS in Scotland, representing 51·5 per cent. of the estimated cost of the pay awards this year. The corresponding proportion for England and Wales is 54 per cent. The rest of the cost will be met largely from the increased allocation already issued to health boards for this financial year.

A further £68 million has been provided from the reserve for family practitioner service programmes, and the cost of the pay awards for general practitioners and dentists will be met in full from this enhanced provision.

Hospital Beds (Fife)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many beds in Fife are included in his forward projection for new hospital beds in Scotland, as announced on 1 May; and if he will state the locations of the beds.

Mr. John MacKay: The proposed developments in Fife are not yet included in forward projections for new hospital beds in Scotland as my noble Friend the Minister of State has not yet received the board's submission for approval-in-principle.

SCOTLAND

Arterial Drainage

Miss Maynard asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will state the total number of schemes for arterial drainage which have been grant-aided by his Department, the number of farmers or landowners who have benefited from such schemes, the area of land which has been drained and the total grant-aid expenditure in respect of each of the years 1980 to 1986, under the Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1958 and under each of the following schemes *(a)* the farm capital grant scheme; *(b)* the farm and horticulture development scheme; *(c)* the agriculture and horticulture grant scheme; *(d)* the agriculture and horticulture development scheme and *(e)* the agriculture improvement scheme (national).

Mr. John MacKay: The information does not exist in the form requested. Under the Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1958 there were three schemes in operation at the beginning of 1980 affecting 18 landowners and covering a total improvement area of 995 hectares. Two new schemes were approved in 1983 and two more in 1984 affecting 37 landowners in all and covering a total improvement area of 467 hectares. The amount of grant paid is set out in the table.

	£
1980	17,865
1981	19,479
1982	7,430
1983	38,546
1984	40,906
1985	17,245
1986	18,453

No arterial drainage was carried out in Scotland under the farm and horticulture development scheme or the agriculture and horticulture development scheme in the years 1980-86. Details for the farm capital grant scheme and the agriculture and horticulture grant scheme cannot be separated. Available figures for the combined schemes is set out in the table.

	Number of payments	*Grant paid (£)*	*Area of benefit (hectares)*
1980	Not available	548,036	4,432
1981	174	357,812	2,362
1982	307	875,105	5,397
1983	369	940,402	5,906
1984	367	1,027,683	5,211
1985	312	821,078	4,830
1986	195	673,121	5,395

The agriculture improvement scheme (national) did not come into operation until 1 October 1985 and no grant was paid in the remainder of that year under the scheme. In 1986, 69 payments were made covering grant of £140,536 and a total area of benefit extending to 6,156 hectares.

Voluntary Organisations (Review)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the cost of the review of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations carried out by Mr. J. S. Gibson; and what fee was paid to Mr. Gibson.

Mr. John MacKay: The total cost of the review (including salary and accommodation costs, printing and overheads) is estimated at £13,385. The gross salary paid to Mr. Gibson was £9,850.

Dental Bridgework

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if, following the letter sent on his behalf, dated 15 July 1986 to the hon. Member for Dundee, East regarding charges for dental bridgework he will indicate what progress has been made in construing and amending the National Health Service (Permission of Charges for Dentures) (Scotland) Order 1952; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: Consultation with the Scottish dental schools and related health boards has confirmed that there are problems in interpreting the wording of the statutory order governing charges for dental bridgework. However, all those consulted agreed that remission of charges should apply not only in cases where treatment was provided by matriculated students, as part of their training, but also in cases which contributed to the training of junior dental staff. A revision of the 1952 order is now being undertaken. There will be full consultation about the new wording.

Integrated Development Programme (Western Isles)

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he will take to secure an extension of the duration of the integrated development programme for the Western Isles, and to extend its operation to other island and mainland crofting areas.

Mr. John MacKay: The integrated development programme for the Western Isles was an initiative by the European Commission. It is for the Commission to come forward with proposals to extend the programme, as the Government requested at the Council of Agriculture Ministers on 31 March. The Council last year approved a Commission proposal for an agricultural development programme for the other Scottish islands, details of which are currently being worked up for implementation later this year.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the gross figures for those claiming unemployment benefit and the percentage of the work force this represents for *(a)* Ayr travel-to-work area, *(b)* Cumnock and Sanquhar travel-to-work area and *(c)* Girvan travel-to-work area for each month since May 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 30 April 1987, c. *215*]: The information is set out as follows:

(a) Table A shows the number of people registered for employment at jobcentres in each of the travel-to-work Areas (TTWAs) and the relevant percentage from May 1979 to October 1982.

(b) Table B shows the number of unemployed claimants in each TTWA (post-code based) and the relevant percentage from October 1982 to May 1983.

(c) Table C shows the number of unemployed claimants in each TTWA (ward based) and the relevant percentage from June 1983 to March 1987, the latest date for which information is available.

Due to the various changes which have taken place in the compilation of the statistics during the period, the figures are not directly comparable.

This information is available in the Library.

Table A
Registrants at Jobcentres May 1979 to October 1982
(978) TTWA

	Ayr		*Girvan*		*Cumnock*		*Sanquhar*	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
1979								
May	3,973	8·5	455	10·1	1,383	9·4	278	14·0
June	4,105	8·7	445	9·9	1,504	10·2	306	15·5
July	4,307	9·2	466	10·3	1,518	10·3	294	14·8
August	4,408	9·4	485	10·8	1,549	10·5	284	14·3
September	4,191	8·9	461	10·2	1,517	10·3	263	13·3
October	4,367	9·3	489	10·8	1,525	10·4	266	13·4
November	4,441	9·5	490	10·9	1,547	10·5	262	13·2
December	4,446	9·5	519	11·5	1,521	10·3	260	13·1
1980								
January	4,738	10·1	551	12·2	1,709	11·6	272	13·7
February	4,619	9·8	545	12·1	1,687	11·5	267	13·5
March	4,518	9·6	545	12·1	1,631	11·1	258	13·0
April	4,551	9·7	529	11·7	1,650	11·2	257	13·0
May	4,333	9·2	496	11·0	1,572	10·7	236	11·9
June	4,602	9·8	570	12·6	1,835	12·5	255	12·9
July	4,946	10·5	576	12·8	1,939	13·2	277	14·0
August	5,053	10·8	590	13·1	1,973	13·4	282	14·2
September	5,240	11·2	589	13·1	2,101	14·3	293	14·8
October	5,608	11·9	626	13·9	2,174	14·8	376	19·0
November	5,777	12·3	660	14·6	2,197	14·9	407	20·6
December	5,882	12·5	658	14·6	2,235	15·2	399	20·2
1981								
January	6,435	13·7	714	15·8	2,406	16·3	450	22·7
February	6,413	13·7	751	16·7	2,397	16·3	449	22·7
March	6,331	13·5	744	16·5	2,333	15·8	436	22·0
April	6,163	13·1	743	16·5	2,423	16·5	428	21·6
May	5,911	12·6	722	16·0	2,352	16·0	396	20·0
June	6,123	13·0	697	15·5	2,504	17·0	433	21·9
July	6,227	13·3	680	15·1	2,563	17·4	445	22·5
August	6,284	13·4	706	15·7	2,647	18·0	444	22·4
September	6,642	14·2	744	16·5	2,646	18·0	441	22·3
October	6,874	14·6	767	17·0	2,568	17·4	425	21·5
November	7,109	15·1	844	18·7	2,636	17·9	412	20·8
December	6,960	14·8	826	18·3	2,763	18·8	415	21·0
1982								
January	7,390	15·7	887	19·7	2,892	19·6	423	21·4
February	7,311	15·6	858	19·0	2,817	19·1	398	20·1
March	7,135	15·2	871	19·3	2,707	18·4	409	20·7
April	7,033	15·0	891	19·8	2,674	18·2	408	20·6
May	7,050	15·0	845	18·7	2,562	17·4	398	20·1
June	6,754	14·4	867	19·2	2,634	17·9	462	23·3
July	7,167	15·3	851	18·9	2,759	18·7	467	23·6
August	7,154	15·2	864	19·2	2,832	19·2	457	23·1
September	7,173	15·3	929	20·6	2,895	19·7	477	24·1
October	7,492	16·0	948	21·0	2,837	19·3	447	22·6

Table B
Unemployed Claimants (Post-Code Based)
October 1982—May 1983
(1978) TTWA

	Ayr		*Girvan*		*Cumnock*		*Sanquhar*	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
1982								
October	7,243	15·4	813	18·0	2,648	18·0	364	18·4
November	7,360	15·7	860	19·1	2,612	17·7	369	18·6
December	7,402	15·8	865	19·2	2,585	17·6	397	20·1
1983								
January	7,673	16·3	906	20·1	2,712	18·4	416	21·0
February	7,670	16·3	887	19·7	2,690	18·3	370	18·7
March	7,590	16·2	849	18·8	2,662	18·1	360	18·2
April	7,543	16·1	833	18·5	2,700	18·3	358	18·1
May	6,965	14·8	822	18·2	2,468	16·8	309	15·6

Table C
Unemployed claimants (ward based) June 1983-March 1987
(1984) TTWA

	Ayr		*Cumnock and Sanquhar*		*Girvan*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
1983						
June	6,216	12·9	3,602	21·1	746	20·4
July	6,573	13·7	3,786	22·2	763	20·9
August	6,600	13·7	3,821	22·4	778	21·3
September	6,728	14·0	3,913	23·0	798	21·8
October	6,766	14·1	4,032	23·7	807	22·1
November	6,842	14·2	4,037	23·7	813	22·3
December	6,796	14·1	4,024	23·6	830	22·7
1984						
January	7,176	14·8	4,271	25·2	872	23·6
February	7,513	14·7	4,237	25·0	891	24·1
March	7,075	14·6	4,149	24·5	875	23·7
April	6,890	14·2	4,138	24·4	839	22·7
May	6,613	13·6	4,058	23·9	799	21·6
June	6,370	13·1	3,937	23·2	764	20·7
July	6,537	13·5	3,958	23·3	760	20·6
August	6,534	13·5	3,975	23·4	748	20·2
September	6,787	14·0	4,022	23·7	804	21·8
October	6,818	14·0	4,077	24·0	818	22·1
November	6,826	14·1	4,030	23·7	851	23·0
December	6,748	13·9	3,978	23·4	850	23·0
1985						
January	7,128	14·4	4,160	24·6	861	23·2
February	7,124	14·4	4,123	24·3	850	22·9
March	6,935	14·0	4,096	24·2	833	22·4
April	6,863	13·9	4,116	24·3	810	21·8
May	6,735	13·6	4,031	23·8	774	20·8
June	6,729	13·6	4,205	24·8	758	20·4
July	6,886	14·0	4,436	26·2	770	20·7
August	6,783	13·7	4,408	26·0	766	20·6
September	6,898	14·0	4,422	26·1	781	21·0
October	7,002	14·2	4,336	25·6	759	20·4
November	6,991	14·2	4,259	25·1	808	21·8
December	6,971	14·1	4,324	25·5	835	22·5
1986						
January	7,350	14·9	4,720	27·9	857	23·1
February	7,233	14·7	4,656	27·5	850	22·9
March	7,055	14·3	4,553	26·9	822	22·1
April	6,961	14·1	4,514	26·7	805	21·7
May	6,762	13·7	4,421	26·1	797	21·5
June	6,557	13·3	4,316	25·5	795	21·4
July	6,748	13·7	4,312	25·5	784	21·1
August	6,766	13·7	4,272	25·2	800	21·5
September	6,810	13·8	4,382	25·9	836	22·5
October	6,859	13·9	4,383	25·9	851	22·9
November	7,036	14·3	4,469	26·4	866	23·3
December	7,102	14·4	4,556	26·9	876	23·6
1987						
January	7,421	15·0	4,864	28·7	980	26·4
February	7,262	14·7	4,845	28·6	907	24·4
March	7,091	14·4	4,741	28·0	841	22·7

DEFENCE

DROPS

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what conclusions his Department's review of competing equipments for the 1983 DROPS selection reached regarding the criteria to be used for the technical decision for the MMLC truck; what weight was to be given to its peacetime payload capability; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will give figures for the contracts entered into for the production of DROPS equipment, showing separately the numbers of *(a)* MMLC and *(b)* IMMLC trucks; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what role the Royal Armaments Research and Development Establishment automotive facility is playing in the testing of DROPS trucks and equipment; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what role the Royal Armaments Research and Development Establishment automotive facility will be playing in future in testing the DROPS trucks and equipment, the subject of the contracts he announced on 5 December 1986; to what extent the Royal Armaments

Research and Development Establishment will be involved in advising him on the extent to which the trucks tested meet the requirements and may be suitable for acceptance into service; and if he will make a statement;

(5) what regard the 1982 general staff target for DROPS paid to the problems of meeting the DROPS requirements with a vehicle that was legal at full payload, and to the degree to which it would be acceptable to operate the DROPS vehicle at reduced payloads in peacetime; and if he will make a statement;

(6) if the road-use combination of MMLC DROPS truck and trailer selected by his Department in 1983 was able to carry as great a payload legally in peacetime as the Boughton MMLC-trailer combination rejected; what peacetime payload capability under *(a)* British or *(b)* German law would have been obtained by selecting Boughton's proposed equipment in 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement will write to my right hon. Friend.

Tornado

Mr. Dykes asked the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins) on 2 April, *Official Report*, columns 566-67, what new measures are now being taken by his Department to bring the Foxhunter Doppler radar system for the Tornado aircraft in United Kingdom service up to the requirements of the Royal Air Force.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The negotiations with GEC referred to in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins) on 2 April, at column 567, are continuing. The firm price which we are now seeking for the remaining work on the Foxhunter radar will replace the existing cost-plus arrangements.

Search and Rescue Service

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals his Department has received for the privatisation of the search and rescue service; when they were received; and what response he is making.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) on 11 May 1987. Bristow's proposals were put to the Department on 26 February 1987.

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has received from commercial companies advocating privatisation of the search and rescue services provided by the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy; and whether he is giving consideration to these proposals.

Mr. Freeman: The Department has received proposals from Bristow Helicopters Limited advocating the transfer of responsibility for United Kingdom search and rescue helicopter units to civil contractors. These are being given careful consideration.

ENVIRONMENT

London Docklands Development Corporation

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what planning permissions have been granted by the London Docklands Development Corporation to *(a)* Martin Burney and *(b)* the Docklands Property Centre.

Mr. John Patten: The London Docklands Development Corporation granted planning permission to Martin Burney in 1985 for the change of use of the ground floor of 222 East India Dock road, E.14 as an estate agency.

In 1986 the Docklands Property Centre was refused planning permission for four temporary portakabins to be used as an estate agency at 847 The Highway, E.14.

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether any flats or houses that are part of the London Docklands Development Corporation's affordable housing scheme have been handled by the Docklands Property Centre; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The corporation does not keep a record of the houses and flats handled by the Docklands Property Centre or other estate agents.

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what investigations the London Docklands Development Corporation has undertaken to find out if *(a)* the Docklands Property Centre and *(b)* other estate agents and property dealers have taken advantage of London Docklands Development Corporation schemes to provide housing for docklands' residents.

Mr. John Patten: Every transaction under LDDC's schemes to provide private housing for docklands residents is subject to investigation by LDDC. As a result of its scrutiny a number of additional safeguards have been introduced to ensure that the schemes are restricted to local residents.

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what role the Docklands Property Centre has played in relation to housing built on London Docklands Development Corporation owned land in docklands.

Mr. John Patten: The Docklands Property Centre is one of a number of estate agents that works independently of the corporation and is appointed by individual developers to market and sell their homes.

Canary Wharf

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when the master building agreement for the Canary wharf development is to be signed;

(2) what postponements there have been to the signing of the master building agreement on Canary wharf; and to what extent these postponements are due to failure to attract sufficient tenants to the development.

Mr. John Patten: The negotiations are at an advanced stage but the detailed terms are subject to commercial confidentiality.

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how much phase 1 of the Canary wharf development will cost; and how much floorspace is involved in this phase;

(2) how much phase 2 of the Canary wharf development will cost; and how much floorspace is involved in this phase;

(3) which companies, apart from members of the Canary wharf consortium, have made a commitment to take space in Canary wharf;

(4) how much floorspace is required to make phase 1 of the Canary wharf project viable;

(5) whether funding or phase 1 of the Canary wharf project has been obtained.

Mr. John Patten: The funding, size and viability of any future construction on Canary wharf and any commitments to occupy these buildings are matters for the prospective developers. These issues are also under consideration in their current negotiations with the London Docklands Development Corporation which are subject to commercial confidentiality.

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what level of scaling down and redesign of Canary wharf was proposed by Olympia and Yorke when considering taking over the development; what level of floorspace and height of building was proposed by Olympia and Yorke; and whether this redesign and scaling down was acceptable to the London Docklands Development Corporation.

Mr. John Patten: No firm proposals emerged from Olympia and Yorke's interest in the Canary wharf development.

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) who is paying for the site works now in progress on Canary wharf;

(2) how much money has been paid by the London Docklands Development Corporation, and how much further money has been allocated by it, for site works on Canary wharf.

Mr. John Patten: The site works currently in progress on Canary wharf are the responsibility of the Canary wharf development company. The London Docklands Development Corporation has made no contribution towards the cost of these works and has no plans to allocate future resources for this purpose.

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total value of enterprise zone subsidies and allowances that will arise out of the Canary wharf development.

Mr. John Patten: This will depend upon the quantity and value of development actually carried out before the expiry of enterprise zone benefits.

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the cost of new roads and road improvements and related land acquisition arising out of the Canary wharf development; and what are the total contributions to be made, respectively, by the Government and the London Docklands Development Corporation.

Mr. John Patten: The road schemes and related land acquisition associated with the proposed Canary wharf development, and how these are to be funded, are among the issues covered by the negotiations currently in progress. These are still commercially sensitive.

Water Authorities (Land Disposal)

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 15 December, *Official Report*, column 398, if he will make available in the Library, a copy of his letter to water authorities in April 1985 setting out Government policy on the disposal of land surplus to their operational requirements, and the guidelines relating for notifying interested bodies, particularly in relation to national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have today placed copies of the letter in the Library of the House. The guidelines to which it refers were orginally issued by the Forestry Commission. I have asked my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland to place copies in the Library.

Job Creation (Telford)

Mr. Hawksley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many new jobs were created in the Telford new town designated area during 1986.

Mr. John Patten: I understand from Telford development corporation that some 5,000 new jobs were created in the Telford new town designated area during 1986.

Urban Programme

Mr. Moynihan asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state the number and value of sport, leisure and play projects supported by the urban programme in 1979-80, 1982-83 and 1986-87; and if he will list the projects currently supported.

Mr. Tracey: Government support through the urban programme for sport, recreation and play projects has increased as follows:

	Number of projects	*Value £ million*
1979-80	500	19·6
1982-83	700	27·6
1986-87	,1,200	33·7

Projects currently supported are listed in the table.

Urban Programme Sport, Recreation and Play Projects
1 May 1987

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
East Midlands Region		
Nottingham		
Red Lion Community Association	—	579
Ukranian Centre	—	6,823
New Testament Church of God Community Hall	PRG	2,666
Red Lion Centre Warden	PRG	12,300
Norwich Gardens Community Association	PRG	752
Station Road Bulwell POS	PRG	40,000
Ukaidi Running Costs	PRG	20,245
Broxtowe Estate	PRG	35,000
Wollaton Grange Community Association	PRG	313
Bakersfield Community Centre	PRG	2,000
St. Peter Mother and Toddler Group	PRG	268
Top Valley Community Association	PRG	2,670
Hyson Green Play Centre	PRG	12,100
St. Peter's Mother and Toddler Group	PRG	230
Improvements to Playgrounds	PRG	20,000
Balloon Woods ADV Playground Association	PRG	6,570
Highbank Community Association—Warden	PRG	1,700
Bestwood Estates Community Association	PRG	227
Coppice Recreation Ground Extension	PRG	25,000
Playworks	PRG	1,300

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Matsimela	PRG	7,362
West Indian Cavaliers	PRG	34,358
Broxtowe Computer Club	PRG	661
Radford Community Centre	PRG	6,300
Afro Caribbean Centre Management	PRG	27,747
Acna Basement Conversion	PRG	3,200
Marcus Garvey Centre	PRG	58,898
Bakersfield and Neighbourhood Community Association	PRG	34,235
Lenton Community Association	PRG	495
Bestwood Parents and Toddlers Group	PRG	200
Notts (Nottm UPA)		
Madrassa East Islamia	PRG	15,000
Youth and Community Support Fund	PRG	20,000
Radford Community Association—Worker	PRG	11,200
New Basford Youth and Community Centre	PRG	12,100
Nottingham Federation of Toy Libraries	PRG	6,000
Ainsley Teenage Action Group Youth Building	PRG	3,400
Muslim Women's Organisation	PRG	20,000
Meadows Muslim Centre	PRG	20,000
Indian Community Centre—Youth Worker	PRG	9,700
Nottingham Vietnamese Centre	PRG	20,000
Russell Youth Club	PRG	400
Playgroup Expansion	PRG	4,400
"Meeting Point" Study Centre Alterations	PRG	16,400
Windbag Inflatables Project	PRG	8,000
Chronicle of Minorities Art (CHROMA)	PRG	24,000
William Olds Youth Centre	PRG	12,000
Hyson Green Play Centre Leader	PRG	9,500
Aspley Youth Centre	PRG	1,700
Crabtree Family Centre Worker	PRG	10,200
Acna/Indian/Pakistan Centres	PRG	50,400
New Basford Youth Project	PRG	12,200
Afro-Caribbean Centre Youth Worker	PRG	10,500
Madni Masjid and Muslim Education Centre	PRG	20,000
Matsimela	PRG	35,000
Edwards Lane Community Sports Area	PRG	36,000
Nottingham Play Resource Centre	PRG	53,550
Munty Hind Boys Club	PRG	900
Leicestershire (Leicester UPA)		
Rathbone development officer	PRG	25,200
Highfields youth and community centre equipment	PRG	7,000
Westcotes annexe modifications/staffing	PRG	43,800
St. Anns adventure playground association	PRG	1,875
Bestwood park community centre improvements	PRG	5,200
Ambleside mother and toddler group	PRG	722
Queens walk young unemployed club	PRG	170
Afro caribbean national artistic centre	PRG	1,833
Indian centre management	PRG	27,747
Hindu temple and community centre	PRG	1,000
Broxtowe adventure playground association	PRG	2,330
St. Matthews keep fit group	PRG	70
All Saints community association	PRG	565
Association of musicians and artists	PRG	16,535
Highbury vale community centre	PRG	65,650
Jinnah society	PRG	2,615
Forest recreation ground revised costs	PRG	35,000
Lenton community centre full time warden	PRG	12,300
Portland baths leisure centre	PRG	9,000
Independent at Garden St. Radford day nursery	PRG	660
Pakistan centre management	PRG	27,747
Hyson green community association	PRG	1,846
Dunkirk—Old Lenton community association	PRG	366
Snape wood community centre—warden	PRG	3,300
Hyson green community association	PRG	4,663
St. Faiths elim church centre	PRG	9,100
Queens walk community association	PRG	994
Edwards lane community centre	PRG	31,000
Stepping out youth club	PRG	250
Edwards lane community sports area	PRG	36,000
Rest. of Sneinton C of E old school hall	PRG	500
Sheila Russell community association	PRG	1,050
Russell youth club	PRG	2,560
Forest fields public open space	PRG	30,000
Bestwood amenities for children group	PRG	30
Wollaton grange community association	PRG	638
Leen valley community association	PRG	610
Women's information/resource/social centre	PRG	105,969
Beechdale community centre	PRG	113,500
Silverdale community association	PRG	420
Forest fields neighbourhood projects	PRG	4,800
Broxtowe community centre-warden	PRG	12,300
Barton lane community centre	PRG	105,000
Clifton village hall management committee	PRG	6,950
Leicester		
Leicester Chinese Centre	PRG	111,100
Bangladesh Youth and Cultural Centre	PRG	33,500
West End Neighbourhood/Care Mentally Ill Centre	PRG	45,800
Asian Sports and Cultural Centre	PRG	32,945
Lansdowne Gardens	PRG	500
Leicester Bengali Language School	PRG	18,000
Muslim Khatri Association	PRG	29,400
Saffron Girls Club Audio Equipment	PRG	405
WEA Education House	PRG	41,100
Moat Infants School Community Wing	PRG	91,200
Saffron Girls Club Audio Equipment	PRG	405
Roof Group Play Scheme	PRG	12,000
Community Wing Highfields Infant School	PRG	8,100
Belgrave Family Centre	PRG	59,000
City Wildlife Project Country Landscapes	PRG	43,600
Conversion of Linwood School/Community Aspect	PRG	27,000
Spinney Hill Primary School Community Centre	PRG	1,000
Madressa	PRG	7,500
After School Care Scheme	PRG	10,000
Catherine Junior School Community Wing	PRG	27,200
Purchase of St. Michael's Church Room	PRG	20,000
Highfields Youth and Community Centre Equipment	PRG	7,000
Belgrave Playhouse Youth Project	PRG	19,300
Maisuria Centre	PRG	22,200
Summer Youth Activities	PRG	26,200
Riverside Linear Park	PRG	207,000
Shama Women's Centre	PRG	156,700
Shree Sanatan Centre	PRG	33,100
Shree Sanatan Centre	PRG	109,100
Woodgate Adventure Playground Sport Hall	PRG	31,500
Leicester City Farm	PRG	19,885
Belgrave Community Centre Complex	PRG	3,000
Saffron Tenants Information Centre Equipment/Furnishing	PRG	7,800
St. Christopher's Community Project	PRG	3,500
AYP Activities Hall	PRG	—
Redesign and Expansion Ofrec. Fac.—Elston FLS	PRG	36,800
Asian Youth Project Centre	PRG	45,700
Community Arts Resource Centre	PRG	36,000
AYP Outdoor Pursuits/Activities Project	PRG	11,700
Federation of Muslim Organisations	PRG	—
Asian Sports and Cultural Centre	PRG	—
St. Matthew's Childrens Centre	PRG	55,500
Under Fives Play Area and Development Project	PRG	23,316
Asian Youth Project Activities Hall	PRG	54,600
Recreation and Arts Creche Provision	PRG	68,800
Muslim Community Centre	PRG	42,400
Leicester Kids Afloat	PRG	13,200

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
AYP Outdoor Pursuits and Activities Projects	PRG	11,700
Young Muslim Youth Training/Recreation Centre	PRG	52,400
The Ajani Centre	PRG	62,200
Playschemes Block Sum	PRG	77,200
Leicester Asian Youth Association/ Highfields Development	PRG	50,100
Bhagini Centre	PRG	113,000
Leicester Asian Youth Association Recreation Centre	PRG	14,000
St. Andrew's Centre Extension	PRG	4,400
Thirlmere St. Gardens—Play Building Extension	PRG	18,000
South Highfields Neighbourhood Garden	PRG	45,589
Derbyshire		
Outdoor Activities Centre Derby	TUP	25,632
Derby Over 60s Club	TUP	9,250
West Indian Community Centre	TUP	8,960
Chinese Community Centre	TUP	8,200
Derby		
Pakistan Community Centre	TUP	6,800
Indian Community Centre	TUP	4,600
Roe Farm Community/Play Centre	TUP	15,000
Chesapeake Community/Play Centre	TUP	18,000
Wellingborough		
Victoria Centre	TUP	12,000
Northamptonshire		
Detached Youth Worker Project	TUP	36,282
Lincolnshire		
St. Giles Youth Centre	TUP	13,346
Corby		
Sunday Streets Football League	TUP	5,000
One o Clock Clubs	TUP	8,000
Hazel Leys Estate Community Association Scheme	TUP	—
Kingswood Community Centre	TUP	15,000
		Number of projects 176
Regional Sub-total		3,868,281
South East Region		
Bedfordshire		
Brantwood Family Centre	TUP	20,000
		Number of projects 1
Regional Sub-total		20,000
Greater London:		
Hammersmith/Fulham		
Last Chance Photography		660
Working With Girls		1,280
Riverside Studios		380
W14 Girls House		730
London Sevashram Sangha		642
Shepherds Bush Mosque		155
Sands End Adventure Playground		2,560
Old Oak Summer Playscheme		1,485
Simba Play Service		1,260
Robert Owen House		1,475
Hammersmith and Fulham Asian Association		155
Hammersmith and Fulham Playbus		1,340
Rastafarian Advisory Service		1,340
Friends of Mary Seacole		185
Woodstock Project		240
Sulgrave Boys Club		100
Last Chance Youth Club		140
Junior Funhouse		155
Last Chance		810
White City Adventure Playground		260
Sands End youth forum		3,490
Leadership training summer camp		1,872
West Kensington detached youth group		1,071
Sands End detached youth project		640
Keith Grove project		220
Summer madness teenage project		1,180
College Park youth club		2,330
Black information unit		1,382
Lancaster Court youth club		870
Vince Hines		1,110
West Kensington youth club		526
Townmead youth club		270
Shaftesbury Christian centre		250
Hammersmith Womens aid		1,010
Wandsworth		
Putney and Roehampton pensioners		—
Tune time for children		—
Ibsley gardens		—
Chivalry road open space		—
Doddington community workforce scheme		29,000
Minstead gardens pensioners		—
Bedford Hill gallery		—
Lambeth		
St Matthews meeting place phase 3		515,654
Brixton music development		6,650
Tower Hamlets		
Geere House pottery room	PRG	12,295
Hammersmith/Fulham		
Hammersmith Penguin swimming club	PRG	155
Fulham Palace handicapped adventure plgd	PRG	4,320
Livingstone nursery school	PRG	282
Colebrooke soc cult and welfare association	PRG	1,030
Bradmore kids workshop out and about	PRG	1,020
Ginger Bread play scheme	PRG	200
Simba youth	PRG	63,000
Sands End community centre (ARISE)	PRG	9,500
Bishop Creighton house playground	PRG	139
Sands End one o'clock club	PRG	310
Fulham Court Y C 13 to 16	PRG	235
Caribbean Focus coordinator	PRG	12,500
Firsthand	PRG	34,100
TAVR community sports hall	PRG	56,900
Last Chance centre roly poly club	PRG	100
Sulgrave Boys club	PRG	3,300
SS Michael and George hall	PRG	15,600
Maystar Summer playscheme	PRG	150
Vanston Place tenants clubroon	PRG	2,500
Avonmore Summer scheme	PRG	2,170
Dorset Wharf and Riverside summer scheme	PRG	533
Kids Family centre	PRG	607
London Sevashram Sangha	PRG	52,000
Firsthand Ltd (Fatima centre)	PRG	22,900
Townmead mother and toddler	PRG	155
Black Amalgamated self help cooperative	PRG	50,400
St. Annes One O'clock club	PRG	31,700
Crisp-tenants hall	PRG	70,000
Palace adventure playground	PRG	35,300
Zion music workshop	PRG	15,400
Fulham court Y C 5 to 12	PRG	235
Sands end community sports hall	PRG	57,700
It's a toddle	PRG	950
Distillery mother and toddler group	PRG	785
Polish social and cultural association	PRG	33,500
St. Katherine's play group	PRG	780
Burhani centre	PRG	26,050
Asian cultural arts	PRG	27,300
Field Road playscheme	PRG	425

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Simba youth extension	PRG	45,100
Grove mother and toddler	PRG	310
Palingswick House Ltd. (fire certificate)	PRG	7,950
Fulham Court tenant association	PRG	1,530
Rampage-Breakaway holiday projects	PRG	3,500
Bishop Creighton house repair project	PRG	25,954
Cuningham East open space	PRG	161,000
Clem Atlee community hall	PRG	30,000
Old Oak community centre	PRG	232,000
Wandsworth		
Wandsworth black elderly project	PRG	66,800
Balham recreation and community trust community centre	PRG	44,100
Shape projects worker	PRG	14,500
Golden age club	PRG	25,400
Latchkey development project	PRG	50,000
St. Nicholas church	PRG	52,000
Tooting neighbourhood centre	PRG	13,500
Furzedown recreation ground	PRG	5,000
Arndale community project	PRG	101,700
Beaumont Road open space	PRG	50,000
Pakistan welfare association	PRG	15,000
WCCR-Millan centre	PRG	51,900
Putney Vale youth group	PRG	90,000
York Gardens community centre	PRG	46,100
Tooting Common	PRG	2,700
Garfield young peoples project	PRG	51,100
Asian muslim centre	PRG	25,000
Ethnic minority domicillary service	PRG	16,000
Wandsworth volunteer bureau—extension	PRG	20,800
Southfields Sikh community centre	PRG	40,000
Battersea boatyard	PRG	113,500
Tooting triangle	PRG	50,000
Ethnic minorities library service	PRG	28,300
St. Saviour's church	PRG	67,000
Henry Prince estate clubroom	PRG	57,000
Eastwood nursery school parents room	PRG	23,700
Elm farm	PRG	7,000
94c Balham High Road	PRG	2,500
Alton hall	PRG	350,000
24 Balham high Road	PRG	667
Life tabernacle renovation project	PRG	5,200
St. Anne's one o'clockclub	PRG	31,700
Crisp-tenants hall	PRG	70,000
Palace adventure playground	PRG	35,300
Zion music workshop	PRG	15,400
Fulham court YC 5 to 12	PRG	235
Sands End community sports hall	PRG	57,700
It's a toddle	PRG	950
Distillery mother and toddler group	PRG	785
Polish social and cultural association	PRG	33,500
St. Katherine's play group	PRG	780
Burhani centre	PRG	26,050
Asian cultural arts	PRG	27,300
Field road playscheme	PRG	425
Simba youth extension	PRG	45,100
Grove Mother and toddler	PRG	310
Palingswick house Ltd. (Fire Certificate)	PRG	7,950
Fulham court tenant's association	PRG	1,530
Rampage/breakaway holiday projects	PRG	3,500
Bishop Creighton house repair project	PRG	25,954
Coningham East open space	PRG	161,000
Clem Attlee Community Hall	PRG	30,000
Old Oak community centre	PRG	232,000
Wandsworth		
Wandsworth black elderly project	PRG	66,800
Balham Rec and Comm trust Comm centre	PRG	44,100
Shape projects worker	PRG	14,500
Golden age club	PRG	25,400
Latchkey development project	PRG	50,000
St. Nicholas church	PRG	52,000
Tooting neighbourhood centre	PRG	13,500
Furzedown recreation ground	PRG	5,000
Arndale community project	PRG	101,700
Beaumont road open space	PRG	50,000
Pakistan welfare association	PRG	15,000
WCCR—Millan centre	PRG	51,900
Putney Vale youth group	PRG	90,000
York gardens community centre	PRG	46,100
Tooting common	PRG	2,700
Garfield young people's project	PRG	51,100
Asian Muslim centre	PRG	25,000
Ethnic minority domicillary service	PRG	16,000
Wandsworth volunteer bureau—extention	PRG	20,800
Southfields Sikh community centre	PRG	40,000
Battersea boatyard	PRG	113,500
Tooting Triangle	PRG	50,000
Ethnic minorities library service	PRG	28,300
St. Saviour's church	PRG	67,000
Henry Prince estate clubroom	PRG	57,000
Eastwood nursery school parents room	PRG	23,700
Elm farm	PRG	7,000
94c Balham high road	PRG	2,500
Alton hall	PRG	350,000
24 Balham high road	PRG	667
Life tabernacle renovation project	PRG	5,200
Battersea Arts Centre—Theatre	PRG	31,000
ILEA (H/F UPA)		
Avonmore primary school	PRG	60,000
Brent		
Roundwood Community Association new play areas	PRG	7,000
Churchend neighbourhood project	PRG	23,000
Nesta new children's play area	PRG	9,000
1-9 Dudden Hill lane open space	PRG	—
St. Raphael's Afro-Caribbean group	PRG	39,000
London Wildlife Trust Neasden Grange project	PRG	9,000
Wildlife working party Neasden library	PRG	38,000
Stonebridge fair-ground site open space	PRG	90,000
Tavistock Methodist centre	PRG	10,000
Nesta ball games area	PRG	9,000
HPCC youth project	PRG	12,200
Mandhata youth and community centre	PRG	17,700
Roundwood Community Association new play areas	PRG	7,000
St. Raphael's women's workshop	PRG	43,200
Sikh community centre	PRG	97,000
GL (Wandsworth UPA)		
Ackroydon Hall Management Committee	PRG	—
Millan community project	PRG	—
ILEA (Wandsworth UPA)		
Pettaugh Association	PRG	—
ILEA (Lambeth UPA)		
United Church Welfare and Workers Association	PTN	2,500
Abeng youth club	PTN	6,250
Ebenezer youth club	PTN	1,484
St. Anne's Catholic settlement youth club	PTN	198,171
Lambeth girls project	PTN	11,667
Central Lambeth project—Stockwell Park estate	PTN	4,280
Stockwell park estate youth and community centre	PTN	6,500
Vassall detached youth project	PTN	109,260
Asian community action group boys worker	PTN	13,600
St. Matthew's youth club	PTN	4,400
Ethelred estate community youth club	PTN	19,985
Railway arch youth club	PTN	44,904
Willington road youth club/play centre	PTN	489,832
St. Thomas youth centre—minibus	PTN	1,485
Central Lambeth project—outreach youth work	PTN	6,250

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
ILEA (Islington UPA)		
Edward square (Caledonian road) site layout	PTN	—
Creative Arts Centre	PTN	—
Clerkenwell youth club	PTN	—
Hargrave Park school school/community playspace	PTN	—
Jack Ashley site—unity association	PTN	—
Mayton street fire station—youth club	PTN	—
Islington Ayo—South Isl music workshop	PTN	—
Holloway school senior boys—youth wing	PTN	—
Clerkenwell parochial school site extention	PTN	—
Turkish youth centre development project	PTN	—
Highbury Roundhouse-youth club	PTN	—
Hayward adventure playground—Fencing	PTN	9,000
Islington project—motorbike maintenance	PTN	9,000
St Mary's Church of England Primary School Site Extension	PTN	—
Mayville Youth Club Music Workshop	PTN	—
Grafton Primary School-Play Centre	PTN	—
Hibury Roundhouse Youth Club Daytime Youth Provision	PTN	—
Asian Women's Discussion Group & Creche	PTN	5,000
Islington Arts Factory-Lighting	PTN	—
Islington Project Workers With Ethnic Groups	PTN	—
Battlebridge Youth Centre Showers/Changing	PTN	18,000
ILEA (Hackney UPA)		
Leaside Young Mariners	PTN	22,000
Improvements To Homerton House Games HL	PTN	—
Refurbishing Statutory Centres, Hackney	PTN	—
Stamford Hill Community Leisure Centre	PTN	40,000
Hackney Downs Youth Centre	PTN	20,000
Children's Scrap Project	PTN	—
Dalston Methodist Youth Club Development	PTN	6,500
Homerton Youth Centre	PTN	20,000
Hutted Classroom's For Parents	PTN	33,000
Lambeth		
Brixton Summer Festival	PTN	21,314
Caldecot School Nature Garden-C6/102-028	PTN	7,000
Oasis Children's Venture	PTN	14,260
The Seventh-Day Adventist Day-SDA-Centre	PTN	283
Stockwell Good Neighbours	PTN	47,900
Rasta International St. Agnes Place	PTN	126,016
Thessaly Road Playspace	PTN	8,488
Employment of 2 Workers For Community House	PTN	3,000
Lileford Road Play Group/Common Day Care Centre	PTN	21,440
St Matthews Meeting Place	PTN	79,880
Oasis Children's Venture Karting Project	PTN	3,000
Coldharbour Lane—301/317-333/349	PTN	55,356
Oasis Children's Venture Compliance of H S	PTN	24,680
BNCA Social Action Centre	PTN	366,822
CCRL Bushey Residential & Holiday Centre	PTN	31,959
St. Matthew's Estate Territorial Army Hall	PTN	197,370
Elam Street Pos Phase 2	PTN	285,090
Kennington Park Territorial Army Mothers and Toddlers	PTN	1,000
UJAMAA Centre	PTN	10,000
Lambeth Chinese Community Project	PTN	146,910
Railton Inters House	PTN	3,800
Brixton Music Development	PTN	127,100
Stockwell Park Estate and Community Centre	PTN	28,200
Sabina Cricket Club	PTN	727
South London Tennis Club	PTN	250
Afro Caribbean Cultural Centre	PTN	57,430
Strathleven Road Open Space—C7/104	PTN	9,338
Lambeth Pensioners Non-Smoking Club	PTN	18,000
Poynders Gardens Estate Community Flat	PTN	7,866
Community Activities Club/Help 71 Com HS	PTN	2,250
Foxley B1.B	PTN	38,500
Harmony Theatre Project	PTN	989
Handicapped Adventure Playground Association	PTN	32,030
Capital City Brixton Volleyball Club	PTN	1,000
All Saints/St. Barnabus Church—C7/104	PTN	46,897
Angell Town Ta Fairfax House	PTN	170,431
Bushey Residential Holiday Project	PTN	49,770
Whitgift Street—C7/104-025	PTN	19,075
Oval House	PTN	1,200
North and Central Lambeth Scouts	PTN	958
Larkhall Community Flat	PTN	3,410
BNCA Social Action Centre	PTN	13,220
Dexter Rd & Larkhall Park 1 o'clock Clubs	PTN	20,000
Thorlands Community Centre	PTN	650
Abeng Centre/Gresham Youth Project	PTN	68,410
Fitzalan Street/Lambeth Walk Pos	PTN	7,000
Railton Community Centre Equipment	PTN	1,380
Waterloo Action Centre Roof Repairs	PTN	2,000
Lambeth Sports Council	PTN	11,965
Kurdish Cultural Centre	PTN	1,000
Brixton Domino and Social Club	PTN	12,750
1 Dalyell Road—C7/104-008	PTN	8,700
Windmill House Tenants Garden	PTN	25,000
PRETA FC	PTN	1,000
London City Mission	PTN	21,600
Lambeth Table Tennis Club	PTN	1,000
Kemble House/Loughsborough Estate	PTN	43,415
Princes Community Centre—C7/104-018	PTN	2,000
Wheatsheaf Hall	PTN	110,000
Tulse Hill Gym Club	PTN	873
Kennington Park Synthetic Pitch	PTN	17,000
Zuriya African Arts and Theatre Project	PTN	31,220
Oval Way—C7/104-017	PTN	23,500
Brixton Cares for Kids	PTN	50,000
Railton Community Centre Minibus	PTN	2,000
CCRL Abeng Community Centre	PTN	240,200
Lambeth Athletics Group	PTN	1,000
King Jesus Divine Church	PTN	1,000
Clapham Senior Citizens Association	PTN	2,000
First Generation Organisation	PTN	73,950
St. Martins Estate Community Hall	PTN	2,500
Und Church & Welfare Workers Association	PTN	28,110
Granby Buildings Site	PTN	44,370
Clapham and Larkhall under 5s Organisation	PTN	2,000
Harleyford Road Community Garden—C6/102	PTN	55,375
Lambeth Arts Council	PTN	17,956
Vauxhall City Farm	PTN	17,730
Windmill Gateway Club Minibus	PTN	7,000
Streatham Spartans Iceball Club	PTN	648
St. Matthews Church Hall	PTN	1,000
Herne Hill Cricket Club	PTN	338
Latin American Childrens Project	PTN	780
Oasis Karts and Tools	PTN	6,900
Vauxhall City Farm Additional Workers	PTN	17,340
Muhammad Ali Sports Development Association	PTN	11,200
Music Workshop	PTN	17,650
Hurst Street Garages—C7/104-013	PTN	2,400
Nelson Row Community Centre	PTN	4,000
Angell Town Play	PTN	40,537
Wheelchair access to Halls	PTN	11,000
Vine House Co-op access to Community Garden	PTN	34,540

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Loughborough Park AP—C7/104	PTN	7,908
Oasis Children Venture Mini Bus	PTN	10,755
Vietnamese Lion Dance Troupe	PTN	1,720
Railton Community Centre Administration Assistant	PTN	1,980
Pensioner Activities	PTN	1,135
Oasis/Priory Grove-C6/102-027-C7/104-016	PTN	43,000
Red Devils Sports Club	PTN	995
Chinese Community Project	PTN	3,500
Bushey Residential and Holiday Centre	PTN	31,000
Oval House Development Phase 2	PTN	348,150
Lansdowne Road Tenants Room	PTN	58,000
Carnegie Library Electric Chair Lift	PTN	10,000
Larkhall Park changing facilities etc	PTN	2,000
Effra Parade Ecological Garden-C7/104	PTN	36,342
Clapham Park East Tenants Association	PTN	57,150
Palace Road Pos	PTN	24,250
Lambeth Refugees from Vietnam project	PTN	81,020
Hawke Road Landscaping—C7/104	PTN	32,490
Tulse Hill Estate Drop in Creche	PTN	390
Lambeth High St. Rec Ground-C6/102-011	PTN	13,500
Manda-Two Bids	PTN	48,040
Marverlets Dancing Group	PTN	220
Hackney		
Holly Street Environmental Improvements	PTN	23,000
Provost Community Hall	PTN	47,200
African Development Agency	PTN	111,000
Boscobel House Environmental & Meeting Room Improvements	PTN	15,000
The Huddleston Centre	PTN	26,800
126 Stamford Hill Environmental Improvement	PTN	5,000
Arts and Recreation Project	PTN	—
Jewish Women's Centre	PTN	28,300
Inky Fingers' Development Project	PTN	—
Dog Free Zone for under Fives	PTN	15,700
Equal Play Adventure Park	PTN	93,400
Mobile Library	PTN	—
Chasipic Band	PTN	—
Pakistan Community Centre	PTN	50,000
Millfields' Lodge	PTN	66,000
Improvement of the Library	PTN	—
Leisure Project	PTN	29,400
Black Women Self Discovery Project	PTN	—
Upgrading under Fives Facilities	PTN	—
Hillside Estate Environmental Improvement Scheme	PTN	25,000
George Sylvester Gymnastics Club	PTN	—
Clapton Park Play Project	PTN	35,600
Astra Cinema Stoke Newington Road	PTN	10,000
Jewish Community Lending, Reference Ltd.	PTN	—
Expansion of Taryag Social Centre	PTN	15,700
Dukom Arts and Drum Workshop Project	PTN	—
Islington		
West Indian Community Association	PTN	40,000
Hanley Crouch Community Centre	PTN	46,000
Islington Chinese group	PTN	14,563
Centre for the unemployed	PTN	—
Trainer for under fives NSOs and Budget	PTN	—
Six acres estate-kickabout area	PTN	15,000
Brecknock estate playground	PTN	17,111
Canonbury court estate community centre	PTN	182,358
Unity association	PTN	40,000
Arundel square playground	PTN	77,176
Highbury round house youth/community centre	PTN	29,000
Islington play lorry	PTN	—
Islington mind network clubs	PTN	27,000
Hi fashion music group	PTN	—
York way court estate playground	PTN	31,137
Surr street playground	PTN	34,052
Sadlers Wells community theatre	PTN	—
Iscinin seci library	PTN	—
Hilldrop estate playground	PTN	54,581
Factory community group	PTN	12,500
Barnard park extension	PTN	108,000
Holloway neighbourhood group Mayton street	PTN	—
Shape	PTN	4,000
Hillrise mansions playground	PTN	30,000
Shearling way play area	PTN	1,940
Anna Scher children's theatre	PTN	—
Charteris community centre	PTN	40,000
Six acres estate—junior playground	PTN	40,000
Ujima Finsbury park project	PTN	51,500
Morton road playground	PTN	3,000
Youth library	PTN	—
Hargreave hall garden	PTN	—
Asian resour[illegible]centre	PTN	39,000
Ringcro[illegible]yground	PTN	3,500
Highbury roundhouse pensioners worker	PTN	85,000
Six acres estate—toddlers playground	PTN	30,000
Unity association—arts and music project	PTN	39,598
Hargreave park under fives project	PTN	29,000
Ormond road craft centre	PTN	65,000
Hilldrop area community association	PTN	8,500
Multi-racial library provisions programme	PTN	36,000
Playsafe and park improvements	PTN	375,000
Greek Cypriot day centre	PTN	67,000
Martin Luther King adventure playground	PTN	—
Muslim welfare centre—community centre	PTN	—
Ethnic arts development	PTN	—
Islington YMCA	PTN	—
King Henry's walk open space	PTN	210,000
West Mildmay N/hood area—C/O batch 1	PTN	5,820
Hi-fashion	PTN	7,000
Hornsey lane estate youth worker	PTN	9,000
Bovingdon close playground	PTN	14,245
New Orleans estate playground	PTN	110,000
Islington Indian association	PTN	16,000
Sickert court estate community centre	PTN	197,750
Islington African project	PTN	35,000
Highbury fields playground	PTN	200,000
Sussex neighbourhood area—c/o Batch 1	PTN	1,670
Patidar Samaj	PTN	37,500
Granville square	PTN	90,000
Delhi-Outram estate playground	PTN	26,249
Spa fields phase 2	PTN	39,025
Graham street new open space	PTN	25,000
Ealing		
Priory Centre for Community Programmes	TUP	20,000
Acton Community Development Project	TUP	25,000
Milap Day Centre for the Elderly	TUP	25,000
Southwark		
Silwood Youth Centre	TUP	100,374
Camberwell After School Project	TUP	39,970
Lewisham		
Pagnell Street Youth & Community Centre	TUP	27,000
Ackroyd Community Centre	TUP	19,000
Greenwich		
NCC Assos Community Centre	TUP	22,600
Newham		
Malayalee Cultural and Social Centre	TUP	20,000
Kensington/Chelsea		
Cremorne Riverside Centre	TUP	9,100
Tabernacle Basement Project	TUP	100,000

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
ILEA (TUP)		
Westbourne Youth Activities Centre	TUP	40,000
Waltham Forest		
Community Work Programme—Walthamstow	TUP	15,250
Westminster		
Westminster Boating Base	TUP	11,525
Regional Sub-total		11,516,401
Number of Projects		404

Sport, Recreation and Play Projects

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Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Merseyside Task Force		
Knowsley		
Hillside Family Centre	PRG	9,800
Provision of Play Equipment	PRG	28,500
Lickers Lane Children's Activity Centre	PRG	11,450
Hillside Play Association	PRG	—
Halewood Town Council Community Centre	PRG	—
Refurbish Football Changing Rooms	PRG	12,000
Halewood Sports Centre Improvement Works	PRG	25,000
Field Lane Environment and Open Space PR	PRG	40,000
Bridgefield Forum Revenue Support	PRG	8,200
Refurbishment of Playgrounds	PRG	24,000
Halewood Boys' Club	PRG	9,000
Prescot Museum	PRG	—
Stockbridge Lane Community Support	PRG	3,000
Kirkby Sports Centre Foyer Extension and Improvement	PRG	4,000
Community Sports Trust	PRG	—
Knowsley Youth Trust	PRG	18,000
Community Sports Project	PRG	3,300
Wirral		
Storage Facilities for Voluntary Organisations	PRG	59,820
Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm	PRG	20,000
Christchurch School	PRG	49,000
St. Annes Youth Centre	PRG	16,892
Wirral Outdoor Education Association	PRG	5,000
Revitalisation Of Parks & Open Spaces	PRG	5,000
Tourism Development Fund	PRG	69,000
Cornwell Recreation And Games Area	PRG	—
Woodchurch Community Centre	PRG	7,000
School Social Scheme Woodchurch Road School	PRG	7,800
Old Bidston School	PRG	35,000
Wallasey YMCA	PRG	1,500
Under Fives Centre Toy Library Vehicle	PRG	12,000
Wirral Play Development Centre	PRG	54,000
Woodchurch Play Provision	PRG	3,247
Leasowe Community Centre	PRG	7,000
Birkenhead Venture	PRG	4,400
Our Lady And Saint Joseph's Community Centre	PRG	5,000
Urban Adventure Centre—Phase 3	PRG	5,000
Woodchurch Leisure Centre Sports Barn	PRG	19,000
Little Theatre	PRG	—
Conway Park B'Head	PRG	50,000
Birkenhead Gingerbread Centre	PRG	10,000
Shaftesbury Boys' Club	PRG	5,058
Liverpool		
Park Children's Centre	PTN	22,000
MPAC Central Res Unit Development	PTN	14,000
Stonedale Adventure Playground	PTN	15,000
Pakistan Association Liverpool	PTN	29,000
Calder Kids Adventure Playground	PTN	5,000
Merseyside Caribbean Council Community Centre	PTN	48,000
Princes Park Community Centre	PTN	9,000
Play Development	PTN	6,000
Youth Action Liverpool	PTN	15,000
Mobile Library	PTN	65,000
Crawford Arts Centre	PTN	7,000
St. Michael & Lark Lane Community Association	PTN	—
Toxteth Sports Centre	PTN	17,000
Deysbrook Community Association	PTN	10,000
Wavertree Athletics Centre	PTN	300,000
Pre-School Organisations	PTN	5,000
Garston Adventure Playground	PTN	25,000
Netherley Centre 27	PTN	43,000
Adventure Playground Speke	PTN	17,000
Junior Football League	PTN	2,000
St. Cleopas Drop In Centre	PTN	22,000
Shorefields School Sports Hall	PTN	36,000
Croxteth/Gillmoss Way Hall	PTN	2,000
Norris Green Youth & Community Centre	PTN	24,000
MPAC Calder Kids Adventure Playground	PTN	—
MPAC Central Res Unit Development	PTN	—
Youth and Community Project	PTN	3,000
Millbank Pool	PTN	1,522,347
Chinese Pagoda Youth/Community Centre	PTN	25,000
Pakistan Association Liverpool	PTN	—
Holiday Play Schemes 1986	PTN	90,000
Regional Sub-total		3,025,314
Number of projects	72	
Northern Region		
Sunderland		
Sunderland Sea Anglers Association Headquarters		40,000
South Tyneside		
St. Matthew's School Jarrow Learner Pool	PRG	35,000
Linked Open Space System Jarrow/Boldon	PRG	20,000
South Shields Foreshore Tourism/Related Development	PRG	190,000
Extra Camping Equipment for Community Groups	PRG	2,000
Cleadon Park Conversion of School to Youth/Community Centre	PRG	84,000
Trinity House Sports Hall Extension Feasibility Study	PRG	2,500
Carr Ellison Park Hebburn Improvements	PRG	2,000
Temple Park Leisure Centre Con Phase II	PRG	100,000
Boldon Colliery Community Room	PRG	6,000
Hebburn Community Centre Sports Hall Extension	PRG	2,500
Tyne and Wear (North Tyneside UPA)		
Grants to Recreational Organisations	PRG	20,000
Sunderland		
Hendon East End Play Project Additional Worker	PRG	—
East Community Centre Extension	PRG	159,000
Downhill Youth Activity Centre	PRG	17,000
Millfield Community Project	PRG	8,000
St. Andrew's Sea Scouts Headquarters New Roof	PRG	7,000
South Hylton Rowing Club—New Headquarters	PRG	50,000
Ford Adventure Playground	PRG	—
Juvenile Crime Unit	PRG	25,000
Farringdon Row/Lambton Staithes Land Development	PRG	100,000
Allotment Improvements Programme	PRG	27,000
Sunderland Play Council Camping Equipment	PRG	6,000
Community Arts Project	PRG	121,000
Claxheugh Rec Area Landscaping and Facil	PRG	191,000

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Fulwell Quarry Sports Ground/Acquisition	PRG	20,000
East End Playscheme—Play Worker	PRG	—
Middlesbrough		
Middletown Park Improvements	PRG	20,000
Marton Grove and Grovehill Residents Association	PRG	—
Play Provision—Pristfieds/Pallister Park	PRG	50,000
St. Oswald's King and Martyr Care and Shore C	PRG	—
Environmental Fund St. Hildas	PRG	—
Middlesbrough YMCA	PRG	—
Play Resource Centre	PRG	2,000
Non-Work Opportunities for the Unemployed	PRG	0
Sikh Temple	PRG	20,000
Abindgon Road Mother and Toddler Group	PRG	—
Spencerbeck Corridor env. Improvements	PRG	0
Netherfield/Pallister Park Residents Association	PRG	7,000
Central Middlesbrough Landscape Plan	PRG	3,000
Playing Fields in East Middlesbrough	PRG	—
Facilities for the Arts	PRG	50,000
East Middlesbrough Community/Employment Centre	PRG	1,112,991
Middlesbrough Music Collective	PRG	—
Park Methodist Church	PRG	—
Cultural Centre Improvements	PRG	12,000
Studio Recording and Rehearsal Equipment	PRG	4,000
Neighbourhood Play Association	PRG	—
Middlesbrough Play Resource Centre	PRG	—
Stockton Street-Recreation Ground	PRG	30,000
Brambles Farm Community Centre	PRG	—
North Tyneside		
Pre-school Playgroup Association	PRG	15,200
Tonbridge Avenue Play Area	PRG	—
Conversion of a Playbus	PRG	—
YMCA Redevelopment Phase III	PRG	—
St. Columbas R.C. School Stage 2	PRG	—
Metro Vandalism-Howdon Station (Kickabout ARE)	PRG	15,500
Lease for Centre for Unemployed North Shields	PRG	—
Family Centres Longbenton	PRG	—
Point Pleasant Park/Phase 3	PRG	10,400
Hunter Street, Wallsend	PRG	10,000
Metro Vandalism (Outreach Workers)	PRG	19,700
Battle Hill Play Association	PRG	3,500
Motor Cycle Trail Park	PRG	—
Longbenton Community High School Changing Accommodation	PRG	57,500
Willington High School Sports Hall Phase II	PRG	11,000
Cleve (M'boro UPA)		
Thorntree Youth & Community Centre M-Bus	PRG	8,000
Audio Recording Facility	PRG	3,000
Grove Hill 10-14 Youth Club	PRG	—
Cleveland Asian Sports Association	PRG	
North Ormesby Library	PRG	—
Town Centre Playgroups Association	PRG	—
Town Centre Playgroups	PRG	—
Cleveland Arts-Ethnic Minority Arts Activity	PRG	—
Gateshead		
Children's Play	PTN	—
Gateshead Community Bus	PTN	26,000
Sport/Recreation Provision School Leaver	PTN	7,000
Community Drama and Puppetry	PTN	14,000
Area Co-ordinator Mothers and Toddlers	PTN	—
Bill Quay Park Extension	PTN	25,000
St. Cuthbert's Community Development	PTN	25,000
Play Supervisors	PTN	—
Trinity Centre	PTN	17,000
Dunston Forum Multi-Purpose Facility	PTN	200,000
Guards Farm	PTN	—
Youthwork Springwell	PTN	—
Holiday Neighbourhood Play Schemes	PTN	10,000
Old Fold Community Development Budget	PTN	4,000
Outline Arts Project	PTN	4,000
Peripatetic Craft Instructor	PTN	9,000
Community Education Programme	PTN	91,000
Schools and Community Conservation Project	PTN	14,000
Neighbourhood Workshops	PTN	29,000
Local Park Redevelopment Works	PTN	150,000
Development and Grants Officer	PTN	13,000
Youth Co-ordinator	PTN	15,000
Newcastle		
Quayside-Live Theatre	PTN	—
Northbourne St. Area N. Housing Association	PTN	13,000
Brunswick Methodist Church	PTN	12,000
Monkchester Recreation Ground-Den	PTN	12,000
Save The Children Fund Day Centres-River	PTN	—
Skin and Bones	PTN	25,000
Prudhoe Street Mission Phase II and III	PTN	7,000
Them Wifies	PTN	23,000
North Kenton Open Space	PTN	25,000
Low Cost Sports Hall North Kenton Park	PTN	59,000
Riverside Music	PTN	20,000
Newcastle Arts Centre External Improve	PTN	15,600
Lightwood Avenue Play and Community Project	PTN	219,000
Byker Photographic Workshop	PTN	5,000
Moorside Mobile Workshop	PTN	26,000
Children's Warehouse	PTN	—
Benwell Nature Park	PTN	3,000
Ouseburn Clubhouse and Marina	PTN	17,000
Pendower Community Centre	PTN	16,000
Walker Park Revitalisation	PTN	300,000
Newcastle Play Council	PTN	—
Kenton School Community Use	PTN	—
Scotswood Fergusons Lane Project	PTN	530,000
Lightfoot Sports Centre Extension	PTN	1,610,437
Tyneside Challenge Club	PTN	13,000
North Kenton Project	PTN	59,000
Bruvvers Theatre	PTN	31,000
City Farm Byker	PTN	30,000
Motor Based Activity Centre Walker Riverside	PTN	36,000
Tyne and Wear (N/G UPA)		
Expendition Centre, Whittingham	PTN	—
Multi Racial Weekends	PTN	—
Conservation Training Centre	PTN	—
Community Playbuses	PTN	—
Wear Valley		
Woodhouse Close Easter and Summer Playschool	TUP	375
Woodhouse Close Community Project	TUP	—
St. Helens Neighbourhood Centre (Holiday Playscheme)	TUP	420
Holiday Playschemes 1986	TUP	4,700
Alnwick		
Alnwick North Community Centre	TUP	—
Hartlepool		
Playscheme 1986/87/88	TUP	7,475
Community Facilities Seaton Lane/Jutland Road	TUP	88,364
Clavering Estate Community Centre	TUP	50,000
West View Community Project	TUP	25,376
Stranton Playscheme	TUP	590
Throston Playscheme 1986/87/88	TUP	800

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Hartlepool People Town House	TUP	31,800
Belle Vue Way Sports Centre	TUP	14,840
Wansbeck		
Youth Leadership	TUP	—
Langbaurgh		
Grangetown community opportunity project	TUP	137,118
Princess Street Community Centre south bank	TUP	14,747
Outdoor pursuits (spring holidays)	TUP	1,110
Provision of permanent play facilities	TUP	—
Handicapped playscheme	TUP	1,700
Summer playscheme	TUP	3,260
Langbaurgh Multi-culture Centre rev sup	TUP	5,088
Outdoor pursuits (summer holidays)	TUP	2,170
Darlington		
Communal facilities at Pilmoor Green	TUP	2,915
Firthmoor Community Centre provision of additonal facilities	TUP	3,521
Resident playscheme Louisa Street Darlington	TUP	3,848
Sedgefield		
Summer playleadership scheme	TUP	7,000
Northumberland		
Community facilities in new school Burnside	TUP	—
Toy library scheme	TUP	—
Cleveland		
Youth and community leader at South Bank	TUP	12,280
Pre-school playgroup summerhouse school	TUP	—
Mobile library service elderly and disabled	TUP	28,125
Derwentside		
Holiday play scheme	TUP	7,000
Stockton		
Stockton anchorage (Youth unemployment project)	TUP	—
Play '86	TUP	8,500
Community hall cafe blue hall	TUP	11,989
County Durham		
Library service for housebound aged/disabled	TUP	—
Villa Real mentally handicapped summer playscheme	TUP	900
Shildon Community Initiatives Centre	TUP	—
Summer holiday relief scheme (playdays 86)	TUP	2,000
Consett County Infant School nursery unit	TUP	20,778
St Helen's neigbourhood project	TUP	—
Durham		
Community play packs project	TUP	—
Durham community arts project	TUP	—
Regional Sub-total		2,034,933
Number of projects	173	
North West Region:		
Blackburn		
Town Centre leisure pool	—	56,000
Wigan		
Craft workshops at Wigan Pier	ODD	37,000
Oldham		
Theatre workshop project	PRG	50,000
Council holiday projects	PRG	29,600
Coppice Neighbourhood Centre	PRG	3,000
Hollins & Limeside Community Centre 0/11	PRG	2,000
Hathershaw Community Centre	PRG	7,000
Higher Lime playing flds changing accommodation	PRG	15,000
Playing fields development	PRG	30,000
Rangers youth organisation 0/11/86	PRG	1,500
Play facilities during summer hols 5/86	PRG	11,900
Blackburn		
Green Lane Community Centre—equipment	PRG	5,000
CRC Com video unit—pre school play	PRG	12,500
Charity football (BB/4/86)	PRG	160
Asian Skills Centre	PRG	30,000
Wensley Fold C.E. Primary School (BB/4/86)	PRG	420
Whitehall Youth Fellowship (BB/4/86)	PRG	220
St. Mary's RC playgroup (BB/4/86)	PRG	539
Belper Street Pool remedial suite (BB/18/86)	PRG	9,000
Blackburn & Darwen sea cadets—improvement to premises	PRG	15,000
Football pitches—Pilmuir Road	PRG	—
Holiday play scheme (1)	PRG	12,000
Springvale playgroup (BB/4/86)	PRG	500
Bangor Street Community Centre—culture of music	PRG	10,000
Roman Road Community Centre—extension design	PRG	5,000
"Bradford" the band (BB/4/86)	PRG	350
St. Thomas's family link unit (BB/4/86)	PRG	733
Inter-centre youth league (BB/4/86)	PRG	750
Green Lane Community Association—(BB/4/86)	PRG	150
Mill Hill St. Peters ground (BB/4/86)	PRG	750
Artificial ice skating rink (BB/11/86)	PRG	47,829
Blackburn Resource Centre—voluntary group (4)	PRG	150
The Classic Entertainers (BB/4/86)	PRG	150
Green Lane Football Club (BB/4/86)	PRG	490
West End Youth Community Centre—central heating	PRG	17,000
Roe Lee pre-school playscheme (BB/4/86)	PRG	500
Equipment for Junior Gateway Club—(BB/4/86)	PRG	400
Whalley Range Community Playgroup (BB/4/86)	PRG	253
Blackburn Musicians Collective (BB/4/86)	PRG	985
Green Lane Community Centre (BB/4/86)	PRG	8,000
Bank Top Community Centre (BB/4/86)	PRG	—
Manpower Services Commission support (21)	PRG	900
Accrington Road Parents and Toddlers Group	PRG	999
Bolton		
Phoenix project (B/5/86)	PRG	500
Refurbishing playgrounds—materials (B/39)	PRG	25,000
Bolton under fives forum (B/5/86)	PRG	529
New and refurbished allotments (B/39/86)	PRG	5,000
Grants to playgroups	PRG	8,000
Bolton Muslim Welfare Association—play equipment	PRG	500
Islamic Cultural Centre (B/6/86)	PRG	25,000
Octagon Theatre	PRG	45,965
Tonge Moor Strikers Football Team—(B/5/86)	PRG	500
Bolton Muslim Welfare Association—recreational facilities	PRG	500
Bolton Clarion Cycling Club	PRG	247
Hallucinations Theatre (B/5/86)	PRG	500

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Breightmet URC (B/5/86)	PRG	500
Northern Mill Engine Society	PRG	135
Top O' Th' Brow F.C. (B/5/86)	PRG	350
Daubhill brickworks playing fields	PRG	22,000
Little Holme reservoir—development of P.O.S.	PRG	10,000
Refurbishing parks—materials (B/39/86)	PRG	20,000
St. Matthew's Parish Church (B/5/86)	PRG	500
Children's holiday activities (Arts)	PRG	4,000
Rochdale		
Recreation area, Darnhill	PRG	0
State Mill Childrens Centre	PRG	50,000
Harry Smith gateway club	PRG	0
Waithlands Rochdale	PRG	7,500
Rochdale waterways project	PRG	0
Langley community sports hall	PRG	0
Workshop manager (temporary)	PRG	4,590
Peel Lane, public open space	PRG	0
Robinson Street, Rochdale, landscaping	PRG	5,000
People print	PRG	0
Community programme top up Bamford Road and Starkey Street	PRG	16,000
Voluntary work development unit	PRG	0
Manchester		
Harpurhey baths low cost sports hall	PTN	0
Gorton leisure pool	PTN	460,446
Moss Side ABC and athletics club M/18/86	PTN	1,368
Blow up association	PTN	14,370
Birley High School	PTN	279,967
Ellen Wilkinson High School	PTN	0
Collyhurst and Moston Lads Club	PTN	0
Fallowfield Brow neighbourhood co-op M/120/86	PTN	43,562
South Manchester Community College	PTN	0
St. Agnes Parish Church	PTN	10,000
Whitworth Centre—shooting area	PTN	0
Off road educational motorcycle project M/47/86	PTN	5,000
Abraham Moss Centre	PTN	0
Summer holiday playschemes M/12/86	PTN	243,500
Cavendish A.B. club M/18/86 part 1	PTN	1,382
Provision of playground Dam Head estate	PTN	0
Broadhurst P F football pitches M/8/86	PTN	161,525
Harpurhey gymnasium	PTN	1,097
Longsight playbuilding M/125/86	PTN	191,950
Wood Side School	PTN	0*
Adventure playground Chorlton building	PTN	0
Ladybarn Community Association M/18/86	PTN	1,680
Computer literacy project	PTN	0
Trinity Church of England high school	PTN	0
Whitworth Centre sports room	PTN	0
Community arts workshop M/18/86	PTN	1,473
Adventure playground Chorlton Park	PTN	0
Python sound system M/18/86 part 1	PTN	1,615
Harpurhey Cultural Centre	PTN	0
Catholic handicapped children M/18/86	PTN	1,055
South Manchester High School	PTN	0
Moss Side adventure playground 5082/488/8	PTN	179,000
Beyond the glass music workshop M/18/86	PTN	1,100
Central library-FAC for blind—part-sight	PTN	13,000
Debdale Sailing Centre—landscaping imps	PTN	36,000
Gorton and District Sunday football league pitch	PTN	30,000
M/CR Radio Controlled Boat Club M/18/86	PTN	1,432
Chevassut County Primary School	PTN	6,000
Play equipment	PTN	0
Ashley Lane playing fields	PTN	0
St. George's Community Association	PTN	—
Boggart Hole Clough—imps to boating facs	PTN	23,000
Rusholme camping equipment M/18/86	PTN	1,811
Greenheys Junior Youth Club M/18/86	PTN	1,176
Miles platting lib remodelling	PTN	—
Wythenshawe urban farm	PTN	—
Willert Street R G playground etc	PTN	—
Moss Side adventure playground phase 1	PTN	30,000
Fianna Phadraig pipeband 1 11/18/86 part 2	PTN	1,620
Play provision fund	PTN	10,000
Simpson Memorial Centre	PTN	22,000
Wythenshawe forum A.B.C. M/18/86	PTN	1,851
Platt Lane Methodist Church Community Centre	PTN	42,370
Plymouth Grove County Primary School	PTN	13,000
Brookdale Park Neighbourhood Play Centre	PTN	—
Brookburn County Primary School	PTN	—
Adventure playground Cheetham area	PTN	—
Moston Lane County Primary School	PTN	—
Turkey Lane and Monsall Neigh project	PTN	16,000
Former Moss Side baths indoor bowls	PTN	—
Salford Harriers Blue Bell Hotel M/89/86	PTN	64,900
Ducie athletics facility M/149/86	PTN	330,000
Chorlton Church of England Primary School	PTN	—
Brownley Green Methodist Church	PTN	8,000
Plant Hill High School—Tweedle Hill and	PTN	—
Adventure playground Cheetham—building	PTN	—
Salford		
Sports Hall Ordsall High	PTN	30,000
Langworthy Park upgrading	PTN	—
Albert Park synthetic pitch	PTN	—
Kersal High School drainage	PTN	—
Youth Centre South Ordsall	PTN	30,000
Hope High School drainage	PTN	—
Seedley Primary School site extension	PTN	—
Peter Green Youth Centre games hall	PTN	—
Lewis Street playing fields	PTN	31,000
Easter/Summer S/4/86 holiday play schemes	PTN	64,287
Langworthy Road School S/49/86	PTN	83,380
Olympic Wrestling Association	PTN	23,000
Barr Hill Lads Club	PTN	44,000
North of Britannia Street S/60/86	PTN	9,545
Regional Sub-total		2,785,295
Number of projects	155	
South East Region		
Woking		
Urdu teaching programme	TUP	1,000
Oxford		
African Youth and Roots Club	TUP	36,086
East Oxford adventure playground	TUP	—
Portsmouth		
Stamshaw Park adventure playground	TUP	15,000
Portsea adventure playground	TUP	45,000
Hertford Street play area	TUP	35,000
Reading		
Coley Park Community Centre	TUP	57,150
Dee Road Park conv play-activity committee	TUP	—
East Reading adventure playground	TUP	—
Berkshire		
Opportunity Centre for under fives	TUP	142,005
Central club development project	TUP	—
Stepstone	TUP	17,450

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Swale		
Queenborough Community Centre	TUP	23,900
Southampton		
Youth and Community Centre	TUP	72,619
Mobile toy library	TUP	9,200
Rochester		
Bangladesh Welfare Centre	TUP	—
Hampshire		
Playbus development work	TUP	
Leigh Park Estate	TUP	
Inner city project	TUP	15,910
Regional Sub-total		470,320
Number of projects	19	
South West Region		
Cheltenham		
Hindu Community Centre	TUP	—
Avon		
Pakistan Community and Cultural Association	TUP	10,000
St. Barnabas Community Centre	TUP	—
Somerset		
Bridgwater Parents' Resource Centre	TUP	—
Devon		
South West resources for play	TUP	2,000
Plymouth		
Elm Community Centre emp of warden	TUP	—
Forest of Dean		
Dean Heritage Museum phase II	TUP	—
Dorset		
Playgroup and nursery provision Isle of Portland	TUP	—
Playgroup and nursery provision, Underhill	TUP	—
Gloucestershire		
School and community teachers	TUP	—
Family reading	TUP	—
Bristol		
	TUP	
St. Paul's neighbourhood house	—	
Sangat Singh Sabha Centre	TUP	34,242
The children's scrapstore	TUP	—
Windmill Hill city farm	TUP	—
St. Paul's adventure playground	TUP	12,500
Bristol playbus project	TUP	—
Stockwood adventure park	TUP	—
Hartcliffe community park farm	TUP	—
Thamesdown		
Swindon octobus project	TUP	—
Teignbridge		
Bradley Community Centre	TUP	—
Regional Sub-total		58,742
Number of projects	21	
Yorkshire and Humberside Region:		
Hull		
Newington Street play area	ODD	3,500
Doncaster		
Body shape gym King Street	ODD	6,560
Rotherham		
Multi Cultural Centre 61-63 Carlisle Street	ODD	13,650
Hull		
Inglemtre Community Association	PRG	2,467
Imps to play area Rossett house Walker Street	PRG	275
Kingston Community Centre—kickabout area	PRG	5,000
Grassed area and play area Chiltern Street	PRG	3,900
Edingburgh Street Community Centre	PRG	6,625
Ocean Youth Club	PRG	2,000
Orchard Park Community Centre	PRG	2,480
All-weather play facilities	PRG	91,280
Advice Centre for unemployed	PRG	18,325
Newington Community Centre	PRG	4,470
Play facilities St. John's Grove	PRG	44,350
Hull Community Play Schemes Association	PRG	9,095
Sobriety project	PRG	11,142
Community Centre Edinburgh Street	PRG	11,145
St. Georges Road playing fields	PRG	3,200
Drypool Green Community Centre	PRG	3,500
Community Centre—Drypool Green	PRG	—
North Hull adventure playground	PRG	51,900
Preston Road Community Centre—roof	PRG	1,200
Humberbus project	PRG	11,335
Preston Road Community Centre	PRG	5,160
East Hull baths phase 5	PRG	8,000
Madley Street arts and dance theatre	PRG	36,079
Hull Fish Trades Boys' Club	PRG	3,500
Coltman Area Community Association	PRG	6,800
Environmental imp in Sculcoates area	PRG	1,500
Community centres block allocations	PRG	45,000
Kingston Kayak Club	PRG	1,000
Planting-Holland Street play area	PRG	250
Summer holiday playschemes	PRG	41,600
Community meeting facilities	PRG	5,500
Humberside (Hull UPA)		
Humberside Disabled Sports Association equipment	PRG	5,149
Refurbishment-club Nexus/playgroup accommodation	PRG	20,300
Housebound library service	PRG	7,430
Improvements to library theatre	PRG	4,200
Hull Fish Trades Boys' Club	PRG	500
Leeds		
Burley Lodge Centre worker/running costs	PRG	3,100
Meanwood Valley urban farm	PRG	54,000
Centrepoint Community Centre Belle Isle	PRG	5,000
Middleton A.R.L.F.C.	PRG	10,000
South Seacroft Youth Club	PRG	11,600
Play ground imp at Potternewton/Miles Hill	PRG	3000
Seacroft WMC sports facilities	PRG	10,400
Priority estates project	PRG	100,000
All weather play area Belle Isle mid school	PRG	13,400
Gathorne terrace public open space	PRG	5,700
Blackman Lane public open space	PRG	33,700
South Leeds Sports Centre—land drainage	PRG	5,100
Interplay trust 65 Hall lane	PRG	6,500
Shape up north	PRG	4,100
Leeds children's holiday projects	PRG	6,500
Caribbean Cricket Club	PRG	49,600
Beeston Hill Community Centre	PRG	70,000
Playground fund	PRG	34,500
St. Matthias Street/Burley public open space	PRG	11,700
Chapeltown recording studio	PRG	—
Bansteads public open space	PRG	17,200
Harehills dance umbrella	PRG	2,300
Cranmore and Raylands Community Centre	PRG	6,700
Vietnamese Community Centre	PRG	52,050
Mimika workshops	PRG	2,000
Kitchen extension—South Gipton Community Centre	PRG	12,300

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Hunslet Lake cafe project	PRG	75,700
Meanwood Tenants Association, Scott Hall Road	PRG	5,200
Sheffield		
Devonshire green recreation—landscape	PRG	10,253
Darnall/Heeley day fostering project	PRG	12,295
Park library community rooms	PRG	25,000
Manor Estate recreational developments	PRG	135,000
Deaf "loop" system	PRG	—
Shop	PRG	16,955
Hyde Park recreational developments	PRG	51,000
Hyde Park stadium	PRG	3,775
St. Silas Community Centre	PRG	22,540
Carrfield Road Centre	PRG	—
Cromford Street multi-games and play area	PRG	60,000
Hawley Street/Edward Street project	PRG	23,858
Children's scrapstore—Sheffield	PRG	
Waltheof campus, Manor	PRG	45,000
City Nipper community bus	PRG	1,753
Community theatre—support theatre groups	PRG	9,500
Burngreave Middle School playing fields	PRG	7,116
Woodthorpe—youth and community worker	PRG	13,307
Darnall District open space	PRG	10,204
Coleridge Road open space, Darnall	PRG	2,849
New employment zones—Lower Don valley	PRG	412,075
Italian Community centre	PRG	6,020
Woodthorpe tenants meeting room	PRG	—
Firth Park library activities room	PRG	28,290
Step support—Burgoyne Road open space	PRG	4,000
Duchess Road community rooms	PRG	10,000
Manor renewal: environmental improvement	PRG	—
Under 55 worker—Denby Street Family Centre	PRG	3,330
Community resource bank	PRG	—
Wybourn play facilities	PRG	—
Manor environmental infrastructure	PRG	132,000
Burngreave toy library	PRG	1,783
Woodside (pye bank) recreational developments	PRG	82,000
Havelock open space	PRG	1,538
Bradford		
Programme leaders for unemployed youth	PRG	39,800
Thornbury playgroup asian playleader	PRG	500
Mapa Women and Girls Group	PRG	5,340
Fagley Community Centre—extension	PRG	3,500
Canterbury Tenants Association	PRG	12,200
Holme Wood under fives toy library	PRG	1,100
Expenses volunteer staff Girlington playgroup	PRG	530
Mcmillan adventure playground	PRG	6,300
Bradford community arts MGT committee	PRG	27,000
Bradford Parent and Toddlers Association	PRG	2,400
Kidditoys (Bierley)	PRG	250
Legrams Lane multi racial playgroup	PRG	1,900
Addingham Youth Club replacement centre	PRG	10,000
Asian Cultural Centre—premises	PRG	1,000
Haworth volunteers OAP's club	PRG	120
Keighley pre-school playgroup	PRG	4,600
Mr Rainbow toy library	PRG	200
Pakistan Community Association	PRG	17,500
Leisure equipment fund	PRG	10,000
Mobile play bus/provision and conversion	PRG	6,012
Bradford Area Play Association	PRG	1,700
St. George's Youth Club—improvements	PRG	4,000
Bradford alternative arts association	PRG	19,800
West Bowling Youth Centre	PRG	5,000
York house residents	PRG	800
Bracken Bank—St. Michaels Church hall	PRG	5,400
Bierley Community Centre—new building	PRG	30,000
Westgate Baptist playgroup	PRG	3,000
Frizinghall Community Association—multi-cultural	PRG	100
Laisterdyke Centre (library/youth centre)	PRG	32,000
Eccleshill Community Centre	PRG	26,700
N. E. Windhill Community Association	PRG	29,800
Family service unit Newby square	PRG	500
Oriental arts	PRG	2,100
1 in 12 club—purchase of a building	PRG	27,900
West Bowling Community Association	PRG	300
Fairfax Mature Students' Association	PRG	11,300
Bradford under-fives group	PRG	9,400
Keighley pre-school playgroup	PRG	1,100
Dawood Buhra Jumat	PRG	4,200
Greenwood Community Association	PRG	2,700
Guru Nanak charitable trust	PRG	11,700
Bradford childrens hospital/toy library/sal	PRG	3.600
Legrams Lane multi racial playgroup	PRG	13,000
St. James' Wednesday Club	PRG	100
Manningham Sports Centre	PRG	22,500
Bierley Community Centre Association	PRG	1,700
Parkside action group	PRG	4,040
Equipment fund	PRG	3,360
Vietnamese community project	PRG	13,800
Legrames Lane Multi Racial Playgroup	PRG	13,000
St. James Wednesday Club	PRG	100
Manningham Sports Centre	PRG	22,500
Bierley Community Centre Association	PRG	1,700
Parkside Action Group	PRG	4,040
Equipment Fund	PRG	3,360
Vietnamese Community Project	PRG	13,800
Calderdale		
Siddal and Exley Community Centre	TUP	106,000
Salt Warehouse Restoration	TUP	75,000
Square Chapel Feasibility Study	TUP	25,000
Barnsley		
Grimethorpe Community Centre	TUP	24,000
East Barnsley Recreation Project	TUP	24,760
Doncaster		
First Aid Social and Recreational Centre	TUP	16,000
Humberside		
Old Goole Community Project	TUP	46,800
Kirklees		
Sikh Community Centre Huddersfield	TUP	100,000
Savile Town Community Project	TUP	11,560
Walpole Community and Play Project	TUP	68,000
Muslim Community Centre	TUP	104,090
Rotherham		
Dual Use Sports Hall Thrybergh	TUP	34,501
Dalton Youth Centre	TUP	32,303
Recreation Avenue Thurcroft	TUP	40,000
Great Grimsby		
Toy Library for Handicapped	TUP	4,321
Nunsthorpe Community Centre	TUP	10,000
Scunthorpe		
Pakistani Social and Cultural Association	TUP	38,500
Adventure Playground Sheffield Park	TUP	18,000
Central Community Centre	TUP	39,973
Sheffield		
The Leadmill Project	TUP	21,660
Wakefield		
Unemployed Young People	TUP	23,800

Name	*Status*	*Total approved*
Humberside (TUP)		
Yarborough First School Community Centre Project	**TUP**	**35,000**
Provision for Unemployed, Scunthorpe	**TUP**	**28,838**
Regional Sub-total		**3,518,646**
Number of projects	**174**	
Grand total (All Urban Programme Authorities)		**33,722,175**
Number of projects	**1,195**	

PTN = Partnership authority.
PRG = Programme authority.
TUP = former Traditional Urban Programme authority.
— = Financial information not immediately available for all projects.

Housing Lists

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimates he has of the total number of households on waiting lists for each local authority in each year from 1979 to 1986.

Mr. Tracey: The numbers of households on waiting lists at 1 April 1986 and the changes in numbers since 1 April 1985 were provided by English local authorities in their 1986 housing investment programme returns. These figures appear in columns B51 and B53, respectively, of the "HIP1 (1986) All Items Print" which is in the Library.

Information for earlier years is not available centrally.

Defective Housing

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each of the designated defective houses under the Housing Defects Act 1984 the progress made in obtaining an approval and warranty scheme for repair methods.

Mr. John Patten: The National Housebuilding Council's subsidiary, PRC Homes Ltd., has now approved 36 repair systems, covering the Airey, Boot, Cornish Unit, Orlit, Parkinson, Stent, Unity, Wates and Woolaway house types. A summary of progress for all designated types is given below. More detailed progress reports are provided regularly by PRC Homes Ltd. and are available in the Library.

House Type	*Number Submitted but not yet Licensed*	*Number Licensed*
Airey	6	7
Boot	—	1
Boswell	—	—
Cornish Unit	1	8
Dorran	2	—
Dyke	—	—
Gregory	—	—
Myton	1	—
Newland	1	—
Orlit	1	1
Parkinson	1	2
Reema Hollow Panel	3	—
Schindler and Hawkesley SGS	1	—
Smith	1	—
Stent	1	1
Stonecrete	—	—
Tarran	1	—
Underdown	—	—
Unity and Butterley	3	6
Waller	—	—
Wates	2	5
Wessex	—	—
Winget	—	—
Woolaway	—	5
Totals	25	[1]36

[1] Includes 10 systems licensed subject to amendments

Council House Sales

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he proposes to take to assist council tenants in the London borough of Camden when they have made a right-to-buy application and have received no correct documentation within the statutory period.

Mr. John Patten: The Department has called on the borough council to explain the delays and say what action it proposes to take. The council's failure to comply with the law gives cause for serious concern, and use of the Secretary of State's powers of intervention is being considered.

Basildon (Housing Ballot)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will announce a decision on the future ownership of houses formerly the responsibility of the Basildon development corporation, following the result of the ballot among tenants announced on 8 April; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley I regard the so-called referendum undertaken by Basildon district council as misconceived and a waste of ratepayers' money. I shall reach a decision on future ownership when the tenants have been properly consulted by the Commission for the New Towns on detailed proposes for alternative landlords.

Birds

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for England, Scotland and Wales those sites which have been identified as meeting the criteria for designation under the EEC birds directive as special protection areas and under the Ramsar convention; when these sites will be designated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) on 18 December 1986 at column *673-74*, which gave details of those sites which have been designated under the EC birds directive and the Ramsar convention. Details of those sites which in the opinion of the Nature Conservancy Council meet the criteria for designation as special protection areas and/or Ramsar sites are as follows:

England	*County*	*Type*
Upper Solway Flats and Marshes	Cumbria (also part South West Scotland)	SPA/R
Solway Mosses	Cumbria	R
Ravenglass	Cumbria	R
Esthwaite Water	Cumbria	R
Duddon Mosses	Cumbria	R
Duddon Estuary	Cumbria	SPA/R
Morecambe Bay	Cumbria/Lancashire	SPA/R
Bowland Fells	Lancashire	SPA
Thorne and Hatfield Moors	South Yorkshire/Humberside	SPA/R
Lindisfarne	Northumberland	SPA
Northumberland Coast	Northumberland	SPA/R
Muggleswick, Stanhope and Wolsingham Commons	Durham	SPA
Bollihope and Middleton Commons	Durham	SPA
Upper Teesdale and Moor House	Durham, North Yorkshire, Cumbria	SPA/R
Bowes Moor	Durham	SPA
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast	Cleveland	SPA/R
Spaunton, Wheeldale, Egton and Glaisdale Moors	North Yorkshire	SPA
Abbotside, Askrigg and Mallerstang Commons	North Yorkshire/Cumbria	SPA
Malham Tarn	North Yorkshire	R
Flamborough Head and Bempton Cliffs	Humberside	SPA
Hornsea Mere	Humberside	SPA
Humber Flats, Marshes and Coast	Humberside/Lincolnshire	SPA/R
Mersey Estuary	Merseyside/Cheshire	SPA/R
Midland Meres and Mosses	Cheshire/Shropshire/Staffordshire	R
Peak District Moors	Derbyshire/South Yorkshire/Staffordshire	SPA
Walmore Common	Gloucestershire	SPA/R
Rutland Water	Leicestershire	SPA/R
Nene Washes	Cambridgeshire	SPA/R
Ouse Washes	Cambridgeshire/Norfolk	SPA
The Wash	Lincolnshire/Norfolk	SPA/R
North Norfolk Coast	Norfolk	SPA
Dersingham Bog	Norfolk	R
Roydon Common	Norfolk	R
Upper Thurne Broads and Marshes	Norfolk	SPA/R
Ant Broads and Marshes	Norfolk	SPA/R
Bure Broads and Marshes	Norfolk	SPA/R
Yare Broads and Marshes	Norfolk	SPA/R
Redgrave and Lopham Fens	Norfolk/Suffolk	R
Breckland Heaths	Norfolk/Suffolk	SPA
Minsmere—Walberswick	Suffolk	SPA
Orfordness-Havergate	Suffolk	SPA/R
Chippenham Fen	Cambridgeshire	R
Stour and Orwell Estuary	Suffolk/Essex	SPA/R
Hamford Water	Essex	SPA/R
Blackwater, Colne and Dengie	Essex	SPA/R
River Crouch Marshes	Essex	SPA/R
Foulness and Maplin Sands	Essex	SPA/R
Benfleet and Southend Marshes	Essex	SPA/R
Isles of Scilly Coastal Habitats	Cornwall	SPA/R
Exe Estuary	Devon	SPA/R
Taw and Torridge Estuary	Devon	SPA
Somerset Levels and Moors	Somerset	SPA/R
Poole Basin	Dorset	SPA/R
Horton Common and Holt Heath	Dorset	SPA
Porton Down	Wiltshire/Hampshire	SPA
Windsor Forest and Great Park	Berkshire	SPA
Avon Valley	Hampshire	SPA/R
New Forest	Hampshire	SPA/R
West Solent Marshes	Hampshire/Isle of Wight	SPA
Woolmer Forest	Hampshire	SPA
Chichester and Langstone Harbours	Hampshire/West Sussex	SPA/R
Lea Valley	Greater London	SPA
Inner Thames Marshes	Greater London/Essex	SPA/R
Chobham to Yateley Commons	Surrey/Hampshire/Berkshire	SPA
Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons	Surrey	SPA
Amberley	West Sussex	R
Pagham Harbour	West Sussex	SPA/R
Pevensey Levels	East Sussex	SPA/R
Dungeness—Pett Levels	Kent/East Sussex	SPA/R
Stodmarsh	Kent	SPA/R
South Thames Marshes	Kent	SPA/R
Medway Estuary and Marshes	Kent	SPA/R
Thanet Coast	Kent	SPA/R

Scotland	*District*	*Type*
North Rona and Sula Sgeir	Western Isles	SPA
Flannan Isles	Western Isles	SPA
St. Kilda	Western Isles	SPA
Shiant Isles	Western Isles	SPA
West Sound of Harris	Western Isles	SPA/R
Loch An Duin	Western Isles	R
Monach Isles	Western Isles	SPA
Balranald	Western Isles	SPA/R
Baleshare and Kirkibost	Western Isles	SPA/R
Bagh Nam Faoilean-Ardivachar	Western Isles	SPA/R
Iochdair and Geirinish Machair and Loch Bee	Western Isles	SPA/R
Na Meadhoinean Iar	Western Isles	SPA/R
Machair Lochs, South Vist	Western Isles	R
West Sound of Barra	Western Isles	SPA/R
Mingulay and Berneray	Western Isles	SPA
Caithness Cliffs	Caithness	SPA
Caithness Lochs	Caithness	SPA/R
The Peatlands	Caithness and Sutherland	SPA/R
Durness Lochs and Streams	Sutherland	R
Handa	Sutherland	SPA
Loch Assynt, Loch Urigill and nearby Lochs	Sutherland	SPA/R
Loch Fleet and The Mound	Sutherland	R
Loch Morar	Lochaber	R
Loch Maree	Ross and Cromarty	SPA/R
Lower Dornoch Firth	Ross and Cromarty/Sutherland	SPA/R
Cromarty Firth	Ross and Cromarty	SPA/R
Affric-Cannich Hills and Glens	Inverness	SPA
Lochs Ashie and Ruthven	Inverness	SPA
Beauly Firth	Inverness	SPA/R
Moray Firth (Munlochy Bayh-Findhorn Bay)	Moray/Inverness	SPA/R
Hermaness, Unst	Shetland	SPA/R
Crussa Field and The Heogs	Shetland	SPA
Fetlar	Shetland	SPA
Blackpark, Yell	Shetland	SPA
Ramna Stacks and Gruney	Shetland	SPA
North Roe, Mainland	Shetland	R
Papa Stour	Shetland	R
Foula	Shetland	SPA/R
Noss	Shetland	SPA
Mousa (part)	Shetland	SPA
Loch Spiggie	Shetland	SPA/R
Fair Isle	Shetland	SPA
North Ronaldsay Coast	Orkney	SPA/R
East Sanday	Orkney	SPA/R
Southeastern Stronsay	Orkney	SPA/R
Papa Westray (North Hill and Holm)	Orkney	SPA
West Westray	Orkney	SPA
South Westray Coast	Orkney	SPA/R
Eday	Orkney	SPA
Rousay (part)	Orkney	SPA
Mill Dam, Shapinsay	Orkney	SPA/R
Marwick Head	Orkney	SPA
North Mainland Coast	Orkney	SPA/R
West Mainland Moors	Orkney	SPA
Lochs of Harray and Stenness	Orkney	SPA/R
Orphir and Stenness Hills	Orkney	SPA
Hoy	Orkney	SPA
Sule Skerry and Stack	Orkney	SPA
Moray Firth (Burghead and Spey Bays)	Moray/Inverness/Grampian	SPA/R
Loch Spynie	Moray/Grampian	SPA/R
Loch Oire	Moray/Grampian	SPA
Troup, Pennan and Lions Heads	Banff and Buchan	SPA
Quarry Head—Fraserburgh Coast	Banff and Buchan	SPA/R
Loch of Strathbeg	Banff and Buchan	SPA/R
Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Lochs	Gordon	SPA/R
Fowlsheugh	Kincardine	SPA
Muir of Dinnet	Kincardine	SPA/R
St. Cyrus	Kincardine	SPA
Glen Tanar	Kincardine	SPA
Lochnagar	Kincardine	SPA
Cairngorms	Badenoch and Strathspey Kincardine	SPA
Abernethy Forest	Badenoch and Strathspey	SPA
Kinveachy	Badenoch and Strathspey	SPA
Loch Vaa	Badenoch and Strathspey	SPA
Loch Alvie	Badenoch and Strathspey	SPA
River Spey—Insh Marshes	Badenoch and Strathspey	SPA/R

Scotland	*District*	*Type*
Tiree and Coll	Argyll and Bute	SPA/R
Treshnish Isles	Argyll and Bute	SPA
North Colonsay and Western Cliffs	Argyll and Bute	SPA
Islay : Rinns	Argyll and Bute	SPA/R
Islay : Glac Na Criche	Argyll and Bute	SPA/R
Islay : Feur Lochain	Argyll And Bute	SPA/R
Islay : Loch Gruinart	Argyll and Bute	SPA/R
Islay : Bridgend Flats	Argyll and Bute	SPA/R
Islay : Laggan	Argyll and Bute	SPA
Islay : Eilean Na Muice Duibhe (Duich Moss)	Argyll and Bute	SPA/R
Islay : The Oa	Argyll and Bute	
Rhunahaorine	Argyll and Bute	SPA/R
Machrihanish and Tangy Loch	Argyll and Bute	SPA/R
Sanda	Argyll and Bute	SPA
North End of Bute	Argyll and Bute	SPA
North Arran Mountains	Cunninghame	SPA
Ailsa Craig	Kyle and Carrick	SPA
Loch Lomond	Dumbarton, Stirling	SPA
Inner Clyde Estuary	Dumbarton	SPA/R
Lochinch and Torrs Warren	Wigtown	SPA/R
Mochrum and Castle Lochs	Annandale and Eskdale	SPA
Wigtown Bay	Wigtown	SPA/R
Loch Ken and Dee Marshes	Stewartry	SPA/R
Caenlochan	Angus, Perth and Kinross	SPA
Montrose Basin	Angus	SPA/R
Loch of Lintrathen	Angus	SPA
Tay-Isla Valley	Perth and Kinross	SPA/R
Dupplin Lochs	Perth and Kinross	SPA/R
Drummond Lochs	Perth and Kinross	SPA/R
Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs	Perth and Kinross	SPA/R
Loch Leven	Perth and Kinross	SPA
Drumochter Hills	Badenoch and Strathspey, Perth and Kinross	SPA
Ben Dubhcraig	Stirling	SPA
Flanders Moss and Lake of Menteith	Stirling	SPA/R
Firth of Tay	Perth and Kinross/Dundee/North East Fife	SPA/R
Eden Estuary, Tentsmuir Point and Abertay Sands	North East Fife/Angus	SPA/R
Cameron Reservoir	North East Fife	SPA/R
Inner Firth of Forth	Falkirk/Dunfermline	SPA/R
Outer Firth of Forth	East Lothian/Edinburgh/North East Fife/ Kirkcaldy	SPA/R
Forth Islands	East Lothian/Kirkcaldy/North East Fife	SPA
Fala Flow	Midlothian	SPA/R
Westwater	Tweeddale	SPA/R
Moorfoot Hills	Tweeddale	R
Gladhouse Reservoir	Midlothian	SPA/R
Hoselaw Loch	Roxburgh	SPA/R
Greenlaw Moor and Hule Moss	Berwick	SPA/R
St. Abbs Head to Fast Castle	Berwick	SPA

Wales	*County*	*Type*
Berwyn	Clwyd/Powys/Gwynedd	SPA
Llyn Idwal	Gwynedd	R
Llyn Tegid	Gwynedd	R
Migneint	Gwynedd	R
Traeth Lafan (Lavan Sands) Conway Bay	Gwynedd	SPA
Anglesey Fens	Gwynedd	R
Ynys Feurig and Cemlyn Bay	Gwynedd	SPA
Holy Island Coast	Gwynedd	SPA
Bardsey Island & Aberdaron Coast	Gwynedd	SPA
Elenydd-Mallaen	Powys	SPA
Cors Caron	Dyfed	R
Llangloffan	Dyfed	R
Pembrokeshire Cliffs	Dyfed	SPA
Skokholm and Skomer	Dyfed	SPA
Carmarthen Bay	Dyfed	SPA/R
Burry Inlet	Dyfed/West Glamorgan	SPA/R
Swansea Bay—Blackpill	West Glamorgan	SPA/R
Severn Estuary	South Glamorgan/Gwent (also Gloucestershire Avon & Somerset)	SPA/R

It is our policy to designate sites under the EC birds directive or the Ramsar convention only when we are satisfied that they meet the appropriate criteria for designation and have been properly protected through notification as sites of special scientific interest. Progress in designating further sites is thus dependent upon the SSSI notification programme.

"Faith in the City"

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey of 6 March, *Official Report*, column 729, he will make a further statement about action he has taken in the light of the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisory Commission on urban priority areas entitled "Faith in the City".

Mr. John Patten: The Department has continued to take action to encourage urban renewal and improve housing in the areas of need through the urban programme and other initiatives such as estate action, which helps local authorities to tackle the problems of housing estates, particularly those in outer areas specifically referred to in "Faith in the City". For 1987-88 estate action's resources have been increased by 50 per cent. to £75 million. The Government are also taking further measures to stimulate urban regeneration through the introduction of new urban development corporations and the new urban regeneration grant, which will help develop larger, underused urban sites.

Newham

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council-owned houses and flats in the borough of Newham have been sold since the implementation of the Housing Act 1980.

Mr. Tracey: Available information indicates that the borough of Newham had sold 2,794 dwellings since April 1979, of which 96 sales were prior to April 1980; however, no sales returns have been received from the borough since the end of 1983-84.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* annual statistics since 1979 of local government spending in Newham, and the percentage of this spending which was financed by the central Government rate support grant.

Mr. Chope: The information for 1981-82 and later years is as follows:

	Total expenditure *£ million*	*Rate support grant as percentage of total expenditure*
1981-82	104·005	56·6
1982-83	105·685	67·6
1983-84	122·811	60·9
1984-85	125·919	56·1
1985-86	124·312	62·9
1986-87	167·161	41·6
1987-88	172·891	47·7

Total expenditure is the measure of local authority expenditure used in the determination of block grant (the main component of rate support grant). It comprises net current expenditure on the rate fund revenue account plus items such as debt charges and revenue contributions to capital and less specific and supplementary grants and items such as interest receipts.

Total expenditures given are those used in the determination of the block grant component of rate support grant.

Estimates of total expenditure prior to 1981-82 are not available.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what moneys are currently owed by his Department to the London residuary body in respect of Greater London council activities prior to abolition.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave him on 6 May. No central record is kept of the Department's non-statutory financial liabilities under contract to individual local authorities.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secreary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the average house price, at the mortgage completion stage, in *(a)* the London dockland development corporation and *(b)* the London borough of Newham.

Mr. John Patten: I shall answer this question shortly.

Housing

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, if he will make a statement about the relation between provision for housing in structure plans and its translation into local plans and development control decisions.

Mr. Ridley: My Department's circular 15/84 sets out the Government's policies on land for housing. It stresses that

> "It is essential that sufficient land is genuinely available in practical terms to enable the policies and proposals in approved structure plans and adopted local plans to be carried forward."

While the advice in that circular remains generally valid, it should not be applied in a doctrinaire or legalistic manner which can sometimes lead to protracted attempts at public local inquiries to prove a case with mathematical exactitude. It was to guard against this tendency that paragraph 18 says

> "It is not the intention, however, that decisions on individual planning applications should turn on a precise calculation of whether the supply of identified sites for housing exactly matches or varies from the 5 year provision derived from the structure or local plan. Such calculations can rarely be exact, bearing in mind the constraints on land becoming available, the incidence of in-fill and other small sites, and variations in the capacity of allocated sites".

In all cases, each application for planning permission has to be considered having regard to provisions of the development plan and to any other material conditions.

It follows that the advice in the circular on detailed procedures should be applied in a way that allows for reasonable flexibility and exceptions, and that advice of general applications should be adapted as necessary to particular situations. In particular, the following points are relevant (references to 15/84):

(i) *Market demand* (paras 2, 5 and 7); in referring to the need to take account to market demand, the intention is to ensure that the provision made in structure and local plans takes proper account of the factors underlying trends in market demand — e.g. demographic changes, the distribution of economic activity and employment, accessibility, journeys to work, availability of local services, and the kinds of housing that housebuyers want to buy. Clearly it is no use making provision for housing in ways that bear little or no relation to these factors. Equally, as is made quite clear in para 3, it is certainly not the intention that established conservation and green belt policies should be overriden in response to the market demand for housing.

(ii) *Phasing* (para 8): As I stated in reply to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean) on 4 June 1986 "Paragraph 8 of my Department's

Circular on land for housing (15/84) refers to phasing the release of housing land. It recognises that the provision of infrastructure and other services may affect the programming of development, but advises that phasing should not be used as an arbitrary rationing process governing the release of land available for development. The purpose is to discourage the practice of specifying in development plans to precise number of acres or houses to be developed each year. Such precision is inappropriate in plans covering several years ahead. Room for flexibility is necessary to enable developers to respond to short-term changes in housing demand. Highly detailed phasing can impose unnecessary costs and constraints on orderly site development.

Where the plan extends over a long period and there are strong pressures for development which it is desirable to resist, it is reasonable for the planning authority to indicate in its plan, in reasonably broad terms, how it intends development to be programmed over the period of the plan. In the absence of such broad phasing, it would be impossible to prevent planning provisions from being exhausted in the early years of the plan. The key requirement is that such proposals for phasing should be explained." (Hansard col. 569).

(iii) *Policy in the absence of an identified 5 years supply of housing land (para 12 and Annex A and B):*

Paragraph 12 of the Circular asks local planning authorities to aim to ensure that at all times land for housing is or will become available within the next 5 years which can be developed within that period and which in total provides at least five years' supply in terms of the general scale and location of development provided for in approved structure plans and adopted local plans.

Annex A to the Circular deals with planning permission for private sector housebuilding. Paragraph 3 says that in the absence of such an identified five years' supply there should be a presumption in favour of granting permission for housing except where there are clear planning objections which in the circumstances of the case outweigh the need to make land available for housing. The following notes explain how this policy can best be applied in practice:

(a) Annex B to the Circular contains advice on joint land availability studies. Paragraphs 4 and 5 of that annex describe a "residual" method that can be used in calculating the amount of land needed to provide a 5 years' supply. It will usually be appropriate to use that method in testing whether the provisions of paragraph 3 of annex A apply.

(b) There may, however be some circumstances where the residual method can give very high figures which it may not be sensible to use as the basis for calculating a 5 years' supply. This can arise if house building rates have been well below the level provided for in the development plan. In cases where this situation has arisen, and is likely to remain so, the residual method of calculation may not be appropriate and the assessment may need to be based on whether the existing supply of land is likely to be sufficient to sustain the probable future level of housebuilding over the five year period having regard to recent building rates and other relevant factors.

(c) If the use of the residual method gives a very low figure for the five years' supply because past building rates have been higher than expected, it may be necessary for the local planning authority to bring forward proposals to revise the development plan to increase the provision made for future years. These proposals can then be considered at an examination in public or at a local plan inquiry in the usual way.

(d) When considering the land which is available to provide the five years' supply, the advice in paragraph 11 of the circular should be followed. This says that sites must be free, or easily freed, from planning, physical and ownership constraints and also be capable of being developed economically, be in areas where potential buyers want to live, and be suitable for the wide range of housing types which the market now requires. The reference to land being free of ownership constraints is intended to ensure that land is not counted as being available if it is subject to legal or other constraints that means that it is unlikely to become available to the housebuilding industry for development within the five year period. However, all land owned or controlled by builders or developers should be included, provided that it is capable of being developed within five years and it is otherwise suitable in the terms of the circular.

The techniques and procedures set out in the circular are intended to ensure that policies are operated in a fair and consistent manner. It is essential that they should not be applied in a way that becomes an obstacle to sensible decisions. There must always be room for negotiation and compromise in the conduct of the planning process.

Agricultural Land (Development)

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to publish the circular, "Development Involving Agricultural Land", which was issued in draft on 9 February.

Mr. Ridley: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) on Friday 8 May 1987.

Thamesmead Estate

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes that the Thamesmead estate should be transferred to Thamesmead town, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 April 1987, c. *603*]: I have today directed the London residuary body, under section 65 of the Local Government Act 1985, to dispose of Thamesmead to Thamesmead town by 18 May 1987. The financial terms are designed with the twin objectives of enabling the company to remain viable and protecting the interests of London ratepayers. Because the financial position of the company depends critically on the number of sales to sitting tenants and of vacant dwellings which it can achieve, it will make an initial payment to the LRB of £2·5 million but will pay a proportion of the receipts from sales thereafter. The company will therefore have an incentive to maximise sales and so to maximise the price paid to the LRB. I have placed a full description of the financial and other terms in the Library of the House.

I should like to congratulate the residents of Thamesmead on their decision to run their own affairs independent of any public sector control. I wish them, their elected board members, staff and chairman Clive Thornton every success in completing and managing their town.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Payroll Giving

70. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the operation to date of the scheme to enable civil servants to make donations to charities under the payroll giving scheme.

Mr. Brooke: I have already announced that the Government as employer will participate in the payroll giving arrangements. We are for example now carrying forward action on the scheme which we plan to set up as quickly as possible for the 216,000 people in a number of Departments who are paid through the largest Civil Service payroll system which is operated by the Treasury at Chessington. We have already approached all the registered payroll agencies in England and Wales and will soon be issuing invitations to tender. Departments covered by other payroll systems are expected to follow a broadly similar procedure.

Higher-rate Taxpayers

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the change in the number of higher-rate taxpayers in 1987-88: and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for all higher-rate taxpayers the forecast distribution by income and tax category.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The number of married couples and single people liable to higher rates of income tax is provisionally estimated to be 1,030,000 in 1986-87 and 1,200,000 in 1987-88. The table shows the distribution of those liable to higher rate tax in 1987-88 by income and tax category.

Higher Rate Tax Units[1], *1987-88 (Thousands)*

Range of income *£ per year*	*Singles*	*Married couples (wife not working)*	*Married couples (both working)*	*All*
Under 20,000	0	0	0	0
20,000-25,000	80	70	60	210
25,000-30,000	50	100	220	370
30,000-50,000	50	120	290	460
Over 50,000	30	50	80	160
TOTAL	210	340	650	1,200

[1] Counting a married couple as one and combining the partners' incomes.

Mortgage Interest Relief

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the saving in mortgage interest relief in 1987-88 by offsetting relief against investment income.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The extent of any saving would depend upon the precise rules proposed for restricting relief.

Africa and South America (Indebtedness)

Mr. Bowen Wells asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proposals he made at the interim committee of the International Monetary Fund and the development committee of the World Bank to deal with the chronic indebtedness of many countries in Africa and South America both to private banks and international institutions; what were the reactions of those to whom he made the proposals; and what further action he proposes.

Mr. Ian Stewart: At the interim and development committee meetings, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor gave his support to the present debt strategy which involves asking all creditors to contribute new money in response to commitment to structural adjustment by debtor countries.

He made three specific proposals to help relieve the debt burden of the poorest and most heavily indebted countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are pursuing satisfactory adjustment policies. Firstly, creditor nations should convert their aid loans into outright grants; the United Kingdom has almost completed this process for its loans to sub-Saharan Africa and many other creditors are following suit. His second proposal was to reschedule other official loans over longer periods; generous grace periods and repayment periods of up to 20 years. His third proposal was that creditor nations should join together to reduce the interest rate on the debt to a few points below market levels.

Reactions to these proposals have been encouraging. Over the next few months the United Kingdom will be working with other Government creditors on the details of the scheme.

Pension and Life Assurance Funds

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the figures for the years 1983 to 1986 of the growth in pension and life assurance funds on the same basis as that given in the reply of March 1984, *Official Report*, column *581*, together with information for these and earlier years showing the percentage invested outside the United Kingdom;

(2) whether he will bring up to date the figures for the increase in life assurance and pension funds referred to in his reply dated 26 July 1985, *Official Report*, column *861*; and if he will provide a forecast for 1987.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The latest information on the growth in life assurance and pension funds is published in table 4.5 of the 1986 edition of "United Kingdom National Accounts" (the Central Statistical Office's "Blue Book") which is available in the Library of the House of Commons. An estimate for 1986 is not yet available, nor is a forecast for 1987. A fully comparable estimate of the percentage of the funds invested outside the United Kingdom is not available.

However, information on the net investment of combined private and public sector pension funds and of the long-term funds of insurance companies, identifying investment overseas, is published in "Business Monitor MQ5", which is available in the Library of the House of Commons.

Investment Income

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to the reply of 6 April 1987, *Official Report*, columns *77-78*, concerning the investment income of females, whether he will provide the same information for all single persons and married couples split between the elderly and those of working age.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The table gives provisional estimates of investment income for single people and married couples who pay income tax in 1987-88. They are based on a projection of the 1984-85 survey of personal incomes. In practice, the survey under-estimates the full amount because it does not provide comprehensive coverage of investment income on which the liability to basic rate tax has been satisfied at source.

Total Investment Income in 1987-88

Range of total income (lower limit)	*Single People*		*Married Couples*	
£ per annum	*(a) Aged under 65 £ million*	*(b) Aged 65 and over £ million*	*(a) Aged under 65 £ million*	*(b) Aged 65 and over £ million*
5,000	530	850	420	610
10,000	330	610	700	450
15,000	330	470	920	540
20,000	380	510	1,280	700
30,000	680	640	2,550	1,100

Allsop Place (Vacant Land)

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to what action the Crown Estate Commissioners propose to take to ensure that the vacant strip of land in Allsop place, London NW1, is weeded and tidied up; and what information he has as to what plans the commissioners have for the permanent appearance of this derelict land.

Mr. Lawson: The site is to be redeveloped. Planning consent has been granted and construction work is due to start before the end of this month. In the meantime, my hon. Friend will be pleased to know that the Crown Estate Commissioners are keeping the weeds under control.

Taxpayers' Files

Mr. Terry Davis asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what circumstances the Inland Revenue destroys PAYE taxpayers' files within the period of six years during which the taxpayers are entitled to make claims.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Under long-standing arrangements files for taxpayers who cease to be within the PAYE system are normally destroyed three and three quarter years after the end of the tax year in which employment etc. ceased.

In addition, following an effeciency scrutiny, new filing arrangements were introduced in November 1983 for the large majority of PAYE taxpayers. Under these arrangements, the existing files were taken out of use at that date. These files are now to be disposed of in the period to 31 March 1988.

Capital Gains

Mr. Hoyle asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what effect he estimates the raising of capital gains will have on *(a)* life insurance policies and *(b)* mortgages linked to house policies; and what amount he estimates will be lost in basic payments.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987]: The new arrangements proposed for the taxation of companies' capital gains should generally have only a relatively marginal effect on post-tax profits reserved for holders of life assurance policies, including those with endowment-linked mortgages. The level of benefits and bonuses allocated to policyholders is however entirely a matter for life assurance companies themselves to determine.

Blind People (Taxation)

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the reply of 30 March, *Official Report*, column 398, to the hon. Member for Alyn and

Deeside *(a)* how many blind people claim the blind person's tax allowance, *(b)* how many of these pay income tax and *(c)* how many of these do not pay income tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987]: Of the 145,000 registered blind people in the United Kingdom, it is estimated that about 45,000 have sufficient income to benefit from the blind person's tax allowance.

Civil Servants (Pay)

Mr. Onslow asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what grades in the Civil Service are currently entitled to automatic annual pay increments; and how many staff this involves.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 May 1987]: Based on the non-industrial component of the official manpower count, but excluding single outside analogues (grades whose pay is determined by reference to pay rates in similar occupations outside the Civil Service), there are 1,149 grades in the non-industrial Civil Service.

The 1,043 which have incremental scales accounted for 495,000 staff on 1 October 1986 (or 99·8 per cent. of all non-industrial civil servants). Of these, 284,000 staff are at the top of their scale, leaving 211,000 who may benefit from an increment in the coming year.

The award of an annual increment is not automatic. Increments may be withheld or withdrawn on efficiency or disciplinary grounds.

There are no incremental scales in the industrial Civil Service, which employed 92,700 staff on 1 January 1987.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Overseas Voters

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, in view of the supply of Conservative party propaganda to Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Harrigan by the British community committee in Paris together with overseas voter registration forms and other documents, he will instruct the British consulate in Paris to cease the supply of such electoral documents to the said association.

Mr. Eggar: No. My right hon. and learned Friend has already explained in his recent reply to letters from the hon. and learned Member of 23 and 24 April why he sees no need for any further action to be taken.

WEU

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new arrangements will now be made for the financing of the Western European Union Assembly; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The activities of the WEU assembly are financed by contributions from member Governments of WEU according to an agreed scale. The budget is agreed annually between the Council and Assembly according to established procedures. No change to these arrangements is envisaged. At their meeting in Luxembourg on 27 to 28 April, WEU Foreign and Defence Ministers acknowledged the increasing proportion of the Assembly's budget taken up by pensions payments, which Governments have a statutory obligation to meet. They considered that, in the future, the pensions and operating elements of the budget could be examined separately.

European Civil Servants

Mr. Robert C. Brown asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what is his policy on keeping the Council of Europe in the co-ordination system of staffing arrangements alongside organisations which go far beyond the European framework;

(2) what is his policy on the introduction of a legal system unifying the staff regulations for all European civil servants, in particular those of the Council of Europe and the European Community.

Mr. Eggar: We agree with the views expressed by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in the reply it gave in September last year to Parliamentary Assembly recommendation 1,000 on a European Civil Service. Copies of the recommendation and the Committee of Ministers' reply are being placed in the Library of the House.

THE ARTS

Business Sponsorship

21. **Mr. Aspinwall** asked the Minister for the Arts how many companies have benefited from the business sponsorship incentive scheme.

Mr. Luce: Since the introduction of this highly successful scheme in 1984, awards have been made to 457 arts organisations. The scheme has brought in a total of £12·39 million new money for the arts, including £3·55 million from the taxpayer.

News International

24. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Minister for the Arts, pursuant to his reply of 9 March, *Official Report*, column *81*, what information he has as to whether the remaining local authority, which at the time of his previous answer was still maintaining a ban on News International publications in its public libraries, has yet lifted that ban; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: In the High Court on 19 March the remaining authority, Brent, undertook not to continue the ban and to ensure that News International newspapers would be available from the following day. I have received no further complaint since.

Classic Film and Television

26. **Mr. Favell** asked the Minister for the Arts what steps he is taking to help preserve classic works of film and television.

Mr. Luce: The British Film Institute, which I fund, maintains the National Film Archive, and spent £5·2 million on the transfer and preservation of film in 1986-87. The National Heritage Memorial Fund donated £62,000 to the archive in 1986-87, specifically for the preservation of classic films. Thanks to Mr. John Paul Getty's extremely generous benefaction, a new conservation centre has been built at Berkhamsted, and will be fully operational this summer.

South-West

27. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in the south-west.

Mr. Luce: I have no record of recent representations about the level of financial support for the arts by specific local authority areas. The level of support is, of course, within the responsibility of each local authority.

Local Authority Support

25. **Ms. Richardson** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in London.

31. **Mr. Soley** asked the Minister for the Arts what recent representations he has received from arts organisations about the level of funding by local authorities in London.

32. **Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received in the past month from arts organisations in London about the level of financial support from local authorities.

56. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of local authority funding for the arts in London.

Mr. Luce: I have had a small number of representations about the funding of Riverside studios, Hammersmith, and the decision of the Tower Hamlets borough council to reduce its support for the arts.

28. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Minister for the Arts what information he has received about the level of support for the arts in London by local authorities.

37. **Mr. Corbyn** asked the Minister for the Arts what information he has as to the present level of funding of arts organisations in London by local authorities.

Mr. Luce: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) on Monday 27 April at columns *55-56*.

29. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in the west midlands.

36. **Mrs. Beckett** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in the east midlands.

45. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in the north-west.

49. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in Yorkshire.

52. **Mr. Pike** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in the north-west.

Mr. Luce: I would refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) earlier today.

30. **Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in Wales.

43. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in Wales.

Mr. Luce: Such matters are properly addressed to the Secretary of State for Wales, but I have received letters about the funding needs of the Sherman theatre, Cardiff.

38. **Dr. McDonald** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the level of financial support for the arts by local authorities in England.

Mr. Luce: I have discussed the level of local authority support for the arts with representatives of arts bodies collectively, and with the local authority associations. The level of support is very much within the responsibility of each local authority.

East Anglia

33. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Minister for the Arts what recent representations he has received regarding the level of his Department's support for the arts in East Anglia.

Mr. Luce: I have received a small number of representations, both in writing and in person when I visited King's Lynn on 25 March.

Acceptance in Lieu

34. **Mr. Gerald Bowden** asked the Minister for the Arts if he has any further plans for changing the rules for the acceptance in lieu of tax scheme.

Mr. Luce: There are no immediate plans for changing the present system for accepting items in lieu of tax, although procedures continue to be kept under review.

51. **Mr. Fairbairn** asked the Minister for the Arts what has been the total spent from the contingency reserves for acceptance in lieu of tax since September 1985.

Mr. Luce: The total sum spent from the reserve since September 1985 is £1,314,549. In addition, the necessary funds will be made available from the reserve in the current financial year to enable the Government to acquire Constable's painting Stratford Mill for the nation.

Elgin Marbles

35. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Minister for the Arts what further representations he has received in relation to the Elgin marbles.

Mr. Luce: I have received one representation, from a member of the public, on the future of the marbles since my hon. Friend's last question in the House on 7 July 1986 at column *14*.

Camerawork

39. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Minister for the Arts whether he has any plans to meet Greater London Arts to discuss the future funding of Camerawork.

Mr. Luce: I have been invited to attend a local authority forum in June, which is being organised by Greater London Arts. I am sure that Camerawork will feature in those discussions.

Leicester

40. **Mr. Janner** asked the Minister for the Arts what proposals he has to increase funding for the arts in Leicester.

Mr. Luce: It is for the Arts Council to determine the allocation of its grant; but both the East Midlands Arts Association, and the Haymarket theatre in Leicester will be receiving increases from the council in 1987-88.

Arts Marketing Scheme

41. **Mr. William Powell** asked the Minister for the Arts whether independent museums and galleries are eligible for the arts marketing scheme.

Mr. Luce: The scheme is an experimental one with a limited budget, intended to encourage subsidised bodies to market more efficiently. It would not be practicable to widen its scope at present, but it allows for small projects to be grouped and independent museums and galleries can be included in this way.

Greater London Arts

42. **Mr. Raynsford** asked the Minister for the Arts when he last met Greater London Arts to discuss the level of support for the arts by local authorities in London.

46. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Minister for the Arts whether he plans to meet Greater London Arts to discuss the level of local authority funding for the arts in London.

54. **Mr. Bidwell** asked the Minister for the Arts what discussions he has had in the last month with Greater London Arts about the level of local authority financial support for the arts in London.

Mr. Luce: I discussed this and other subjects when I met the new director of Greater London Arts in March. I have been invited to attend a local authority forum in June, which is being organised by Greater London Arts.

Payroll Giving

44. **Mr. Waller** asked the Minister for the Arts what plans he has to increase awareness of the payroll giving scheme among arts organisations.

Mr. Luce: My Office has published a guide to the scheme for arts bodies, "Payroll giving: making it work for the arts", explaining how it operates and what arts bodies can do to encourage payroll gifts. The Arts Council has its own publicity in preparation and intends to hold a seminar for arts institutions which will include payroll giving. The Charities Advisory Trust is also holding a seminar aimed at museums. I shall be taking a keen interest in the scheme's progress.

Museums and Galleries (Attendances)

47. **Sir David Price** asked the Minister for the Arts what is his best estimate of the total number of people attending museums and galleries in the United Kingdom in 1986.

Mr. Luce: Comprehensive museum attendance figures are not available for 1986. The information collected for the Museums Association database suggests that over 68 million visits were made to museums and galleries in the United Kingdom during 1985.

Architectural Heritage

48. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Minister for the Arts what priority he accords within his overall policy for the arts to the preservation of the architectural heritage.

Mr. Luce: Preservation of the architectural heritage is mainly the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment but I liaise closely with him on matters which also affect moveable heritage items, for example the acceptance in lieu of tax of historic houses including their contents.

Tourist Industry

50. **Mr. Adley** asked the Minister for the Arts if he regularly meets representatives of the tourist industry to discuss matters of mutual interest; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I am always happy to meet with representatives of the tourist industry to discuss matters of mutual interest. My officials regularly attend meetings of the heritage committee of the British Tourist Authority and keep closely in touch with tourism initiatives.

Regional Opera

53. **Mr. Dorrell** asked the Minister for the Arts when he next plans to meet the chairman of the Arts Council to discuss regional opera.

Mr. Luce: This is one of the matters that I periodically discuss with the chairman. The last occasion was on 30 April.

Business Sponsorship Scheme

55. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Minister for the Arts whether he is satisfied with the progress of the business sponsorship scheme for the arts.

Mr. Luce: The business sponsorship incentive scheme has proved highly successful in raising £12·4 million of new money for the arts and attracting over 400 first time sponsors. A total of 70 per cent. of BSIS money has gone outside the London area. I believe that the scheme can attract still more sponsors for the arts and, as I indicated to the House during the debate on the arts on 12 March, I have decided to continue the scheme in 1988-89.

Henry Williamson Papers

57. **Mr. Speller** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will list the present locations of the Henry Williamson papers, taken by Her Majesty's Government in lieu of tax liabilities; if he will now arrange for these to be held in the new county library in Barnstaple; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The Henry Williamson papers were accepted in lieu of tax in 1980 and were subsequently allocated to the university of Exeter. Ownership of the papers was transferred to the university under a formal direction. I am not therefore able to make other arrangements for onward transfer.

National Gallery

58. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Minister for the Arts when he next plans to meet the director of the National Gallery to discuss the proposed extension.

Mr. Luce: I met the director of the National Gallery recently when I examined the plans for the extension to the gallery which is to be built thanks to the exemplary generosity of the Sainsbury family. My officials maintain frequent contact with the director and his staff on this and other matters.

Kent Opera

59. **Mr. Freud** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the future of Kent Opera.

Mr. Luce: I refer the hon. Member to the statement by the Arts Council following its meeting on 29 April, which indicated that a decision on the future of Kent Opera had been deferred to give an opportunity for increased local and business support to be obtained.

Sir Isaac Pitman (150th Anniversary)

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Minister for the Arts whether he will arrange for an exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall to mark the 150th anniversary of Sir Isaac Pitman and Pitman Publishing.

Mr. Luce: I understand that arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall between 18 and 22 May 1987.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Minister for the Arts on how many occasions his office sponsored advertisements in national newspapers during the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Luce: None.

Books on Cassette

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Minister for the Arts what guidance he has issued concerning the provision by public libraries of books on cassette for people unable to read; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I have issued no specific guidance. The main role of public libraries in this respect is to act as an advisory and referral point to agencies providing these facilities for people unable to read.

TRANSPORT

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much value added tax has been paid by his Department on work carried out by the London Residuary Body.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: About £110,000.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what moneys are owed by his Department to the London Residuary Body in respect of Greater London Council activity prior to abolition.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This information is not recorded centrally by the Department.

Private Security Companies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been paid by his Department for services provided by private security companies in each of the past five years.

Mr. Moore: The figures for services and for buildings exclusively occupied by my Department are as follows:

	£
1982-83	27,000
1983-84	26,000
1984-85[1]	204,000
1985-86[1]	213,000
1986-87[1]	311,000

[1] The increase from 1984-85 onwards follows contracting out of previously in-house services.

M20 (Ashford-Hollingbourne)

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state the latest progress on the public inquiry into the Ashford-Hollingbourne section of the M20 motorway; when he expects to publish the inspector's report; what is the amount spent on design and construction of this section so far; and when, subject to completion of satisfactory procedures, he hopes to let the main construction contract.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are considering the inspector's report, which was received in February. I hope to make an announcement and publish the report this summer. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the remaining statutory procedures, we hope to start main construction early next year.

The costs to date are as follows:

	£
Design work	3,250,000
Surveys and testing	425,000
Advance construction of two bridges	2,527,000
Other expenses	22,000
	6,224,000

As I explained in my reply to my hon. Friend on 19 January 1987, column 387, design costs up to 1980 and the Department's administrative costs are not included.

Hackney Carriage Licences

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance he has issued to local authorities as to the criteria for the assessment of unmet needs in issuing hackney carriage licences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: Guidance on this subject was given in paragraphs 26 to 28 of the Department of Transport's circular 3/85.

M25 (A12 and M11 Section)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, in view of congestion now evident on the M25 between the A12 and the M11, he will consider reintroducing a new trunk road on the line of the abandoned M12.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. The M25 caters for traffic moving around London. A road along the line of the M12 would serve radial traffic. I am satisfied that the needs of radial traffic can be met by junction improvements on the existing A12. The A12/M11 section of M25 is coping quite satisfactorily with a heavy traffic flow. We shall continue to monitor its operation closely.

British Airports Authority

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the total amount paid each year since 1979 by the British Airports Authority for security at each of its airports.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Before the winding up of the aviation security fund in April 1983 BAA's security costs were reimbursed from the fund. In 1982-83, the final year of the fund, the payment to BAA, excluding that in respect of policing, was £20,592,422, made up as follows:

	£
Heathrow	12,493,114
Gatwick	4,294,867
Glasgow	1,746,362
Stansted	290,770
Edinburgh	783,840
Aberdeen	711,569
Prestwick	271,920

Corresponding figures for earlier years are not immediately available. The costs incurred since the fund was wound up are entirely a matter for BAA.

Vehicle Excise Duty Evasion

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his estimate of the total amount of revenue lost in each year since 1979 because of vehicle excise duty evasion.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A comprehensive survey carried out by the Department in 1984 assessed the gross revenue loss through vehicle excise dety evasion in Great Britain to be about 4 per cent. of that due. No comprehensive surveys were undertaken between 1979 and 1984. Based on an assumed 4 per cent. evasion rate the loss of revenue in each financial year from 1979-80 would have been:

VED—Great Britain Only

	Gross revenue collected £ million	*Estimate loss from evasion £ million*
1979-80	1,136	47
1980-81	1,333	56
1981-82	1,582	66
1982-83	1,799	75
1983-84	1,951	81
1984-85	2,213	92
1985-86	2,370	99
1986-87	[1]2,505	104

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[1] Estimate.

London Regional Transport

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what is the current salary of the chairman and each member of the London Regional Transport board;

(2) what are the proposed salaries for the chairman and other members of the London Regional Transport board for the 1987-88 financial year.

Mr. David Mitchell: Current annual salaries of the board members of the LRT are as follows:

Member	*Salary £*	*Time commitment*
Chairman		
Sir Keith Bright	59,500	Full time
Deputy Chairman		
Mr. D. Hardy	14,750	1½ days per week
Full-time members		
Dr. T. M. Ridley	47,500	Full time
Mr. J. Telford Beasley	46,500	
Mr. B. Dale	46,500	
Part-time members		
Sir Neil Shields	17,250	Two days per week
Mr. K. Brown	5,250	half day per week
Miss E. Cole		
Dr. S. Glaister		
Mr. K. Joyner		
Mrs. H. Robinson		
Miss P. Steel		

These salaries fall due for review later in the financial year.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list all London Regional Transport's subsidiary companies and their directors.

Mr. David Mitchell: The five subsidiary companies of LRT and their directors are as follows:

LONDON UNDERGROUND LIMITED

Chairman and Managing Director:

Dr. T. M. Ridley

Executive Directors:

J. E. Allen
W. R. Clarke
L. S. Lawrence
Dr. H. A. Fitzhugh
R. N. Straker

Non-Executive Directors:

B. G. Dale
B. J. Hooper
R. F. Dorey
D. W. Turner

LONDON BUSES LIMITED

Chairman and Managing Director:

J. Telford Beasley

Executive Directors:

I. G. Harkness
C. Hodgson
J. E. Ingleton
D. H. Peeler
T. J. Lowe
N. V. Cohen

Non-Executive Directors:

B. G. Dale
Mrs. R. Day
D. N. McLure
M. T. Smith

LRT BUS ENGINEERING LIMITED

Chairman:
W. R. Fairhall
Executive Directors:
M. G. Gormally
I. G. Higgins
R. T. Parker
A. Fishwick
Non-Executive Directors:
B. G. Dale
B. J. Hooper

LONDON TRANSPORT INTERNATIONAL SERVICES LIMITED
Chairman:
Dr. T. M. Ridley
Managing Director:
D. T. Coughtrie
Non-Executive Directors:
Sir Keith Bright
J. Telford Beasley
B. J. Hooper
L. S. Lawrence
Sir Peter G. Masefield

DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY LIMITED
Chairman:
D. W. Hardy
Managing Director:
C. F. Bonnett
Non-Executive Directors:
B. G. Dale
Dr. T. M. Ridley
Miss P. A. Steel

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many penalties have been incurred by operators of London Regional Transport tendered bus routes over the last 12 months.

Mr. David Mitchell: Contractual penalties incurred by operators of LRT tendered bus routes are a commercial matter entirely for LRT.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to publish a timetable for the deregulation of bus services in London.

Mr. David Mitchell: We have made clear our intention to extend bus deregulation to London in due course. No firm timetable has yet been decided.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport which subsidiary companies of London Regional Transport he has directed to provide him with annual statements of accounts; and from where copies may be obtained.

Mr. David Mitchell: London Regional Transport's subsidiary companies are subject to the Companies Act requirements regarding disclosure of annual accounts.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what bodies will be responsible for paying for subsidies for non-commercial bus routes in London in the event of the deregulation of bus services.

Mr. David Mitchell: This is a matter for decision nearer the time.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport from what date he expects London Regional Transport to be operating with zero revenue subsidy.

Mr. David Mitchell: I expect that before the end of the decade LRT's increasing efficiency in providing transport services which attract increasing numbers of passengers will eliminate the need for revenue support to cover the overall difference, before depreciation, between operating costs and income. That would leave only a requirement for support in aid of investment.

CIVIL SERVICE

Home Civil Service

65. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he will list his precise responsibilities for the organisation, management and overall efficiency of the home Civil Service.

Mr. Luce: I refer my hon. Friend to the recent MPO report "The Challenge of Change in the Civil Service", a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House.

Training

66. **Mr. Nicholls** asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he will make a statement on the quality and quantity of training for civil servants.

Mr. Luce: In 1985-86, 35,000 training courses were run for civil servants. The Government are committed to high quality training as a principal means of improving the operational performance of the Civil Service and coping with change.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Culinary Herbs

Mr. Speller asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will estimate the value and proportion of United Kingdom consumption represented by imports of culinary herbs which can be grown commercially in temperate climates.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information necessary to provide the estimate requested could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost, but trade statistics do indicate that imports of garlic have been increasing and reached £4·6 million in 1986.

Bird Scaring

Mr. Gale asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his Department's current expenditure on research into the development and testing of new bird-scaring techniques based on stimuli produced by the birds themselves; what results have been achieved from that research; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: In 1987-88 it is anticipated that some £10,000 of ADAS manpower resource will be allocated to bird scaring research and development. In addition to development work to identify ways of increasing the efficiency of existing commercial scaring devices, work is also being undertaken on development of bird scarers based on auditory alarm stimuli using selectively amplified natural distress calls of pest species and on development of scarers based on visual alarm stimuli, involving investigation of aspects of aversive bird behaviour or markings which can be incorporated into models or mechanical scarers. Work has also been done on models which are able to attract certain bird species away from commercially valuable crops to grassland and less valuable areas. ADAS has also recently been able to undertake as part of its commercial services, field trials and other research and development for commercial interests in this area.

Hill Farmers

Dr. Cunningham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why he has not replied to the representations made to him on 9 March by the hon. Member for Copeland on behalf of hill farmers from Ennerdale and Wasdale; when he proposes to do so; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jopling: When the hon. Member met me with members of the Cumbria branch of the NFU I suggested that since their concerns had not been considered by the headquarters of the NFU they should arrange for this to be done so that a single case could be put to me relating to England and Wales. The president of the NFU subsequently wrote to me on 23 April. However, I had already announced on 13 April that the compensation arrangements for marked sheep would be improved on the lines requested to provide for individual pen valuations and for sales of ewes with lambs at foot. I am currently considering the matters put to me by the president of the NFU. On these I have already concluded that a further element of compensation is justified in relation to the additional costs of handling sheep before they can be released from the restricted areas and I expect to make an early announcement.

Animal Housing

Mr. Wallace asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he intends to introduce measures to strengthen with fire alarm systems the protection of buildings housing animals.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Farm Animal Welfare Council has recently been considering the question of fire alarms for livestock buildings and I understand that it has received evidence that these are not practical in the present state of technology.

Veal Crates

Mr. Wallace asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to the answer of the hon. Member for Calder Valley (Mr. Thompson), *Official Report*, column 726, 22 January, when he intends to lay draft regulations regarding proposals to ban the use of veal crates.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The regulations are being drafted following consultations with interested organisations. It is hoped to lay them before Parliament as soon as possible.

Movement of Animals

Mr. Wallace asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has any proposals to alter the existing code of guidelines for the movement of animals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I announced last November that the Government intended to rationalise the many orders on the welfare of animals in transit, starting with a new poultry transport order. Proposals for this new order were circulated to interested parties in April. The two existing codes of practice, on the transport of farm animals and horses by air and by roll-on/roll-off ferries, will also be amended where necessary.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what moneys are owed by his Department to the London residuary body in respect of Greater London council activities prior to abolition.

Mr. Jopling: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Coast Protection

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current procedure he uses for assessing claims for Exchequer grants submitted by coast protection authorities under the provisions of the Coast Protection Act 1949, part I, section 21.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The technical soundness of the proposals and their suitability as a solution to the problem is examined by my engineering staff. The value of the benefits to be derived is set against the costs so as to measure the economic worthwhileness of the proposals. Confirmation is obtained that notices have been served and the proposals advertised as required by the Coast Protection Act 1949 and that there are no objections from other Government Departments concerned, from neighbouring coast protection authorities whose coastline could be affected, from local fishery, harbour, and navigation bodies, or from environmental interests.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will indicate for each year from 1976 to 1986 inclusive the names of the coast protection authorities submitting applications for Exchequer grants under the Coast Protection Act 1949, the estimated cost at the time of tender of each individual application and the amount of the grant awarded for each individual application.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Information for the period since 1 April 1985 is in the tables. Information for earlier periods before my Department assumed responsibility for these grants is not readily available and could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

Schemes submitted for which grant is still under consideration
1 April 1985—31 December 1985

Authority and name of scheme	*Estimated Cost*
	£
Tendring D.C.—Sea wall, Holland Haven	25.000
Chichester D.C.—West Beach, Selsey	8,000
Bournemouth B.C.—Hengistbury Head, Phase IA	150,000
Scarborough B.C.—Marine Drive Emergency Works	30.000
Arun D.C.—Littlehampton, Rustington and Ferring	345,000
Hastings B.C.—Reconstruction of sea wall	5,415,000
Holderness B.C.—Withernsea—Scheme 10	318,000
1 January 1986—31 December 1986	
South Wight-Sea Wall at Bouldnor	243,518
Chichester—West Wittering	25,000
Wansbeck D.C.—Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	1,165,000
Torbay B.C.—Oddicombe/Babbacombe	30,000
Thanet D.C.—Pegwell Bay, Ramsgate	600
Waveney D.C.—Corton Revetment	192,190

Authority and name of scheme	*Estimated Cost*
Portsmouth C.C.—E. Flank Slopes to Southsea Castle	680,000
Great Yarmouth B.C.—Caister Sea Wall	830,438
North Norfolk D.C.—Emergency works, Weybourne	22,594
Thanet D.C.—Rendezvous, Margate	192,000
Thanet D.C.—Winter Gardens Ramp	112,000
Tendring D.C.—Holland-on-Sea	62,575
Scarborough B.C.—Whitby West Cliff	2,581,380
Worthing B.C.—Seafield Avenue and George V Avenue	205,000
Scarborough B.C.—Sandsend Sea Wall	15,000
Bournemouth B.C.—Hengistbury Head Stages 1A(2)–5	2,257,324
Thanet D.C.—Marina Pool, Ramsgate	380,000
Christchurch—Gundimore to Avon Beach	125,000

Schemes submitted for which grant has been awarded

Authority and Name of Scheme	*Cost eligible for grant £*	*Grant awarded £*
1 April 1985 to 31 December 1985		
East Devon district council—Axmouth Harbour	126,793	38,030
North Norfolk district council—Happisburgh	13,452	9,570
Arun district council—Sea wall repairs, Bognor	32,510	10,080
Scarborough borough council—Royal Albert Drive	7,777	3,420
North Norfolk district council—Mundesley Groynes	111,850	88,360
Chichester district council—E. Beach, Selsey	153,500	121,265
Eastbourne borough council—Groyne Replacement	227,305	97,740
Wirral metropolitan borough—Hoylake Bathing Pool	61,550	41,240
Wyre borough council—Apron Resurfacing Phase I	208,500	91,740
Sunderland borough council—Hendon Sea Wall	194,322	114,650
Thanet district council—Westbrook, Margate	206,900	146,900
Bournemouth borough council—Hengistbury Head Stage I	667,000	420,210
Blackpool borough council—South Shore Slades	866,014	583,135
Hartlepool borough council—Town Wall, Sandwellgate	108,207	63,840
Wirral metropolitan borough—West Kirby Marine Lake	323,559	216,785
Worthing borough council—Groynes—Goring and Worthing	170,439	73,290
Brighton borough council—Palace Pier	102,560	40,000
Holderness borough council—Hornsea Sea Defences	216,000	170,640
East Devon district council—Orcombe Point Groynes	41,522	9,965
Blackpool borough council—Norbreck Shoreline	4,498,226	3,553,600
Canterbury county council—Preston Parade, Whitstable	768,783	607,340
Shepway district council—Sandgate, Folkestone	20,812	12,280
Sunderland borough council—Hendon Bank	843,905	632,930
New Forest district council—Milford-on-Sea	270,019	80,605
Suffolk Coastal district council—The Dip, Felixstowe	21,195	5,085
1 January 1986 to 31 December 1986		
Kerrier district council—Porthleven, Phases 2 to 7	228,183	100,400
New Forest district council—Barton-on-Sea	14,411	4,465
Christchurch borough council—Highcliffe Stage II	489,968	387,075
North Norfolk district council—Happisburgh 854	20,719	16,370
Chichester district council—Groynes, E. Beach, Selsey	145,000	73,950
Tendring district council—Harrold Road, Clacton	12,100	8,395
Bournemouth borough council—Southbourne Stage 13	634,000	462,820
Suffolk Coastal district council—The Dip, Felixstowe	666,000	359,640
North Cornwall district council—North Crooklets	76,332	23,660

Milk Quotas

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what were the reasons for choosing 1981 as the year on which the United Kingdom's milk quota was based; and if he will estimate the difference from choosing 1983 as the base year.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: 1981 was chosen as the base year for fixing member states' quotas because the level of production in that year was closest to the overall level which the Community was hoping to achieve in order to bring supply into better balance with demand. The difference in quota award for the United Kingdom between a 1981 and a 1983 base was about 200,000 tonnes.

Agricultural Tenancies

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government has taken since 1979 to improve agricultural tenancies.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The Agricultural Holdings Act 1984 which I introduced to Parliament amended the law relating to agricultural holdings in England and Wales. It introduced a new rent formula to be applied by arbitrators in determining the rent payable in respect of agricultural holdings. It disapplied the succession provisions of the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in relation to most tenancies (apart from succession tenancies) created on or after 12 July 1984 so that such tenancies were subject to lifetime security of tenure only. Tenancies in existence at that time were unaffected, although the rules for statutory succession were amended in certain respects. The Act made amendments concerning the length and operation of notices to quit. It also made a number of minor technical amendments and repealed certain redundant provisions in existing legislation.

The Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 consolidated all the legislation in this area and both sides of the industry generally agree that it now strikes the right balance of interest between landlord and tenant.

Beef

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to support British beef producers.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: At successive price fixings, in the face of almost unanimous opposition from other member states and the European Commission, we have successfully defended the beef variable premium scheme, which is currently worth £120 million per year to United Kingdom producers. At the December 1986 Council we secured the premium for a further two years, as well as taking steps to cut back intervention. These changes will bring the regime more into line with market realities: in my view they provide beef producers with greater assurance for the longer-term stability of the sector than has previously been possible.

The suckler cow premium was introduced in 1980 at £12·37 a head and by 1984 we had doubled the rate throughout the United Kingdom, partly by topping up through national funding. It is now worth £28 million per year.

The annual value of hill livestock compensatory allowances paid to beef producers in the United Kingdom's less-favoured areas increased from £26 million in 1979 to some £50 million this year. Beef enterprises also benefited by nearly £11 million from the special aid paid out in 1985 to help those livestock producers most seriously affected by the exceptionally bad weather.

Farmers (Capital Taxation)

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to reduce the burden of taxes on capital on farmers.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: Taxation matters are dealt with by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Since 1979 the Government have reduced the capital tax burden as it affects farmers in several different ways. These include improved reliefs against inheritance tax (formerly capital transfer tax), reductions in the rates of this tax, including the introduction of a 30 per cent. relief for agricultural landlords, and the abolition of the charge on outright gifts; in the case of capital gains tax, the lowering of the qualifying age for full retirement relief, an increase in the level at which such relief applies and an increase in the percentage of land which may be disposed of without charge from an agricultural holding from 5 per cent. to 20 per cent.

Marketing

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to promote the marketing of British agricultural produce.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The Government established a new organisation, Food From Britain in 1983, to improve the marketing of our food and drink, both at home and abroad. Since then FFB has spent about £15 million mainly provided by the Government. On the home market FFB has established the foodmark quality assurance scheme which covers 22 products; mainly in the fresh and lightly processed sector. FFB is also encouraging the development of the speciality food sector and running the British food information service. In the export market FFB has concentrated on four key countries—Benelux, France, Germany and the United States of America. Promotions there have resulted in direct sales worth over £30 million in each of the last two years.

The Government have also continued to make grants available towards the marketing costs of farming co-operatives during their early years.

In addition to continuing general advice on marketing, there has been a substantial increase in the number of ADAS full-time specialists who can advise farmers or growers on marketing of their produce.

Rural Economy

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to diversify the rural economy.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: We have been active in a number of ways in encouraging farmers to diversify into ancillary farm-based businesses. Since 1985 grants have been available in the less-favoured areas for the first time under the agriculture improvement scheme for a range of farm tourism and craft projects. In 1986 we took powers in section 22 of the Agriculture Act to widen the available scope and geographical coverage of these grants and as I have already announced a new grant scheme will be introduced later this year. The socio-economic advisory service has continued to offer advice to farmers on diversification and general advice of this kind remains free of charge.

In addition, a number of other Government Departments and agencies offer a wide variety of advice and assistance on rural diversification. The details are set out in the handbook "Action for Rural Enterprise" published by the Development Commission for Rural England.

Dairy Producers

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to support British dairy producers.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The thrust of the Government's agricultural policy has been to provide the industry with a firmer long-term foundation by mathcing production more closely with the needs of the market. This is of course particularly true in the dairy sector, where the surplus problem has been the most serious.

The introduction of quotas was inevitably traumatic for the industry, but massive resources were devoted to the allocation of quotas with speed and equity and to cushioning the effect on the most vulnerable producers — for example by means of a £50 million outgoers scheme. In Community negotiation the Government secured and have successfully fought to maintain flexibility through the formula B system and regional compensation. The reductions in quota agreed last December were accompanied by generous compensation to producers. The Government have taken a lead in pressing for Community action to reduce the cost of animal feed.

At a domestic level, Food From Britain was established in 1983 to promote the marketing of British food and drink, including dairy products. ADAS has helped farmers develop production and business management strategies to meet the reduced output requirements under quotas, and the Government are supporting a number of projects in research centres which are of direct relevance to the problems of the dairy industry.

The dairy industry's own enterprise, and the Government's commitment to it, have contributed to improved farm incomes in real terms over the last two years; of all the main types of farming, it is the dairy sector's real net income position which compares most favourably with that in 1978-79.

Sheepmeat

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to support British sheepmeat producers.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: British sheepmeat producers have benefited from the Community sheepmeat regime, introduced in 1980. As a result of our successful negotiation of this regime our producers receive annual ewe premium and variable slaughter premium currently worth over £200 million per annum. The regime is an important factor underlying the continuing expansion of our sheepmeat sector: production rose by 29 per cent. between 1979 and 1985. Exports rose by 27 per cent. last year compared to 1985 to a record 63,600 tonnes.

In successive price-fixing we have fought off proposals to adjust the terms of the regime in ways which would have put our producers at a disadvantage. We have three separate cases currently before the European Court in which we are challenging the EC Commission for operating the rules of the regime to the detriment of producers in Great Britain.

The annual value of hill livestock compensatory allowances paid to sheep producers in the United Kingdom's less favoured areas has increased from £31 million in 1979 to some £61 million this year. We have also granted aid to sheep farmers to compensate for the effect of exceptional circumstances. Sheep enterprises benefited by nearly £3 million from the special aid paid out in 1985 to help those livestock producers most seriously affected by the exceptionally bad summer weather. In addition, £4·3 million has been paid to date under the schemes to compensate producers in Cumbria, Wales and Scotland for the effect on their enterprises of the restrictions we introduced following the Chernobyl incident last year.

We have increased the wool guarantee from 115p/kg to 129p/kg. This has helped to sustain producer interest in developing wool quality so enabling the British Wool Marketing Board to promote British wool exports notably to Japan where our exports have risen from £0·87 million in 1980 to £8·5 million in 1985.

Pesticides

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to control the supply and use of pesticides.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The Government have taken powers to control the supply and use of pesticides in Part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 and have implemented these powers through the Control of Pesticide Regulations 1986. These regulations prohibit the sale, supply, storage, use and advertising of any pesticide in the United Kingdom unless it has an approval, and imposed further conditions by means of consents and approvals made under the regulations.

Nitrogenous Fertilisers

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the Government's policy on the supply and use of nitrogenous fertilisers.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The Government are concerned to ensure free and fair competition. However, in view of recent sharp and sudden rises in urea imports to the United Kingdom, temporary restrictions have been imposed on imports from certain countries.

My Department encourages farmers to assess the requirements of each crop for nitrogen fertiliser in accordance with good husbandry practice and to restrict application to those times when the crops can utilise the nitrogen.

Anti-discriminatory Measures

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he has taken to resist discrimination against British agriculture.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The Government have repeatedly made it clear that we will not stand for measures which discriminate against the United Kingdom. We have fought successfully for this principle. In 1984 we resisted proposals to limit barley intervention on the basis of fibre content which would have adversely affected the United Kingdom. We have repeatedly had to fight to retain the beef variable premium scheme, on the last occasion securing its retention for an unprecedented two years, and to avoid discriminatory proposals on the headage limits for ewe premia. We avoided paying a disproportionate share of the sugar elimination levy introduced as a result of the 1985-86 review of the sugar regime. In the 1986 price negotiatons we successfully resisted discriminatory proposals on cereals coresponsibility levy exemption and on the headage limit for beef premia. Throughout 1986 and into 1987 we successfully insisted on parity with France on Monetary Compensatory Amounts (MCAs) on pigmeat, eggs and poultry. Most recently in the Council agreement in December 1986 we ensured that the milk measures were applied fairly across the whole Community; retained flexibility in the milk quota system and obtained green rate devaluations for beef and sheepmeat.

We have consistently made it clear that all Community producers must take their fair share—but no more than their fair share—of the burdens of CAP reform. This is again a key point in our approach to the 1987 price fixing negotiations.

Bovine Somatotropin

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the Government's policy on the use of bovine somatotropin.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: Although trials of this substance have been authorised under the Medicines Act, no applications for licences which would allow its commercial use have been received. Any such applications would have to be judged by the strict criteria laid down in the Act. I have asked the Farm Animal Welfare Council for its advice on the animal welfare implications of the use of bovine somatotropin.

Butter

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy on retaining stocks of butter in intervention.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: There are good reasons for reducing intervention stocks of butter where to do so does not disrupt the normal fresh butter market.

The important thing is to follow policies which do not encourage the accumulation of surplus stocks in the first place. I therefore welcomed the measures which the Council agreed in December to reduce milk production quotas and to restore the system of intervention to its original role of safety net as opposed to a guaranteed outlet whilst at the same time ensuring the stability of the market.

Dairy Surpluses

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the reasons for the cuts in milk quotas; and to what extent Britain contributes to dairy surpluses.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: Cuts in milk quotas in 1987-88 and 1988-89 were needed because supply continued to exceed demand; the Commission estimated that even with quotas at their previously agreed level the Community was still producing 9½ million tonnes of surplus milk each year. Provisional figures for 1986 show that over 90,000 tonnes of United Kingdom butter was sold into intervention that year—nearly 15 per cent. of the community total — while intervention purchases of United Kingdom skimmed milk powder amounted to over 65,000 tonnes, about 11 per cent. of the Community total.

Farm Animal Welfare

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to improve the welfare of farm animals.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: We have set up the Farm Animal Welfare Council, which has carried out wide ranging studies into welfare on the farm, in transit, at markets and at slaughter. Its current studies include the transport of animals and pig production systems.

We have sponsored the Animal Health and Welfare Act 1984, have made regulations to protect poultry at the point of slaughter, to stop unnecessary mutilations on the farm, to ban the tooth grinding of sheep, to protect animals in intensive units, and to safeguard welfare on export. We have also made new welfare codes for cattle, pigs, domestic fowls, turkeys, ducks and rabbits, commissioned research into various aspects of the slaughter of poultry and red meat animals, and supported work on alternative systems of poultry husbandry.

We have announced a forthcoming ban on the veal crate system of calf rearing and have embarked on a major rationalisation of the legislation on welfare in transit. A new code on welfare at slaughter is now being prepared.

Within Europe we have secured the adoption of further Community rules on welfare in transit and mandatory standards for battery hens. We have also played an active part within the Council of Europe in the formulation of welfare standards for hens, cattle and pigs.

Industrial Support

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to support the agricultural industry.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987]: The Government came to power committed to the non-discriminatory reform of the common agricultural policy as offering the best prospect for the long term stability of the agriculture industry. We have consistently and successfully pursued this aim.

In this and other contexts we have:

— retained the beef variable premium.

— resisted proposals to limit eligibility for ewe premium.

— doubled the suckler cow subsidy.

— extended the less favoured areas to include marginal land, making hill livestock compensatory allowances and higher rates of capital grants available to an additional 36,000 holdings.

— paid special weather aid of £16·9 million to 60,000 livestock producers most seriously affected by the bad summer weather in 1985.

— passed the Agricultural Holdings Act 1984 which, with other measures, was consolidated by the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 facilitating the letting of agricultural land.

— maintained a major commitment to expenditure on Research and Development, currently £170 million per year.

— introduced a new farm capital grant scheme to implement the EEC Regulation on improving agricultural structures, with a premium for young farmers.

— negotiated in Brussels and introduced in the United Kingdom arrangements for protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

— achieved agreement at the Agriculture Council in December 1986 under United Kingdom presidency on reforms on the CAP milk and beef regimes and on a package of structural measures.

— announced a package of measures providing for a new scheme to promote planting of farm woodlands, an expansion of traditional forestry; a widening of the scale of, and scope for, diversification of farms; a doubling of the resources devoted to environmentally sensitive areas; an increased emphasis in research and advice on possibilities for novel crops and livestock.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 12 May 1987

SOCIAL SERVICES

National Insurance

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, further to his reply dated 13 March, *Offical Report*, column 330, concerning the cost of a reduction in the employee's contribution to national insurance, whether he will provide an estimate for the cost in 1987-88 together with an estimate of the effect on the revenue by extending the proposed scheme to the earnings of the self-employed in classes 2 and 4, and of removing the upper limit on such contributions.

Mr. Major: I assume that the first part of the hon. Member's question refers to a cut of five percentage points in the standard rate of employers' national insurance contributions. This, together with the lower rates paid in respect of the lower paid falling in proportion, would reduce the full year yield of employers' contributions by £8·3 billion in 1987-88.

A cut of five percentage points in the rate of class 4 national insurance contributions. to 1·3 per cent. would reduce the full-year yield of class 4 contributions by £320 million in 1987-88.

Removing the upper profits limit for class 4 national insurance contributions (currently £15,340) would increase the full-year yield of class 4 contributions by £240 million in 1987-88.

Hospital Hostels

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the seminars for National Health Service planners about provision of hospital hostels which he intended to arrange early in 1987 have now been held; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: It is intended that there will be about five seminars in different parts of the country and arrangements are currently in hand to set these up. The objective of the seminars is to spread knowledge of the best ways of providing long-term in-patient care for those people chronically disabled by mental illness, whilst avoiding the institutional environment of traditional long-stay wards.

AIDS

Mr. Ron Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received calling for compensation to be paid to patients who contract AIDS from blood supplied by the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The Department has not received any representations regarding compensaton for patients who may have contracted AIDS following transfusion of whole blood. The risk of human immunodeficiency virus infection from whole blood has always been very small and since October 1985 has been reduced to minimal proportions by the introduction of screening for all blood donations.

Details of the numbers of representations for compensation for those infected with HIV from blood products, were given in my reply to the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) on 19 March at column *626*.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what training is made available to port medical officers to enable them to diagnose AIDS sufferers.

Mr. Newton: All port medical inspectors are fully qualified and experienced medical practitioners. Their professional qualifications are sufficient to enable them to assess the health of persons referred by immigration officers to them for medical examination, and to make the appropriate recommendation.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give his most recent projections of the numbers of people *(a)* who will be suffering from AIDS and *(b)* who will be carrying the HIV virus for each of the next five years.

Mr. Newton: The communicable disease surveillance centre, which collects information about persons suffering from AIDS, has predicted that the number of new cases of AIDS will be 1,300 in 1987 and 3,000 in 1988. As yet there are insufficient data for reliable forecasts beyond 1988 to be made.

Forecasts of the numbers of persons infected with the human immunodeficiency virus have not been made. The numbers currently infected in the United Kingdom are estimated to be about 40,000.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give his most recent estimate of the average total cost *(a)* to the National Health Service and *(b)* to local authority social services of caring for and treating a person suffering from AIDS.

Mr. Newton: I regret that this information is not available. The best estimate of the average total hospital in-patient cost of caring for a person with AIDS is £17,600 from diagnosis to death.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when his Department first became aware that supplies of Factor VIII were contaminated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I assume that my hon. Friend is concerned with the transmission of the AIDS virus. Evidence emerged from the United States of America in 1982 that haemophiliacs were contracting AIDS and although the mechanism of infection was not known, it was presumed that it had been transmitted through the use of blood products such as Factor VIII.

It was not until October 1984 that experimental work showed that the human immunodeficiency virus in Factor VIII could be inactivated by heat treatment. Following this discovery manufacturers took steps to increase supplies of heat treated Factor VIII. All Factor VIII now used by haemophiliacs in this country is heat treated.

The new Blood Products Laboratory at Elstree was officially opened last month. Substantial production is expected from this facility later this year, building up to self-sufficiency in early 1989.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims regarding attendance allowance are awaiting determination resulting from the recent Court of Appeal decision regarding the interpretation of continual supervision; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: Some 6,000 cases are awaiting determination because they may be affected by the recent Court of Appeal judgment. The attendance allowance board expects soon to issue guidelines to its delegated doctors on the application of the judgment, which will enable decisions to be given in these cases.

Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Welwyn Garden City

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) between what dates the Essendon ward of Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Welwyn Garden City has been closed;

(2) between what dates the Ayot ward of Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Welwyn Garden City has been closed;

(3) how many admissions to the Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Welwyn Garden City have been cancelled due to the closure of the Ayot ward;

(4) how many urgent admissions have been made to neighbouring hospitals due to the closure of the Ayot ward at Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Welwyn Garden City.

Mrs Currie: The provision of services at Queen Elizabeth II hospital, Welwyn Garden City, is a matter for the East Hertfordshire health authority. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the health authority for detailed information about Ayot and Essendon wards.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make funds available to the North West Thames regional health authority to ensure that East Hertfordshire health authority is given adequate resources to open the Essendon ward at the Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Welwyn Garden City.

Mrs. Currie: The allocation of resources to East Hertfordshire health authority is a matter for the North West Thames regional health authority.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about the closure of the Essendon ward at the Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Welwyn Garden City.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy) on 12 February at column *341*. Since that date we have received correspondence specifically referring to the closure of the Essendon ward at Queen Elizabeth II hospital, Welwyn Garden City, from my hon. Friends the Members for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) and for Watford (Mr. Garel-Jones); and from the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy).

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why the Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Welwyn Garden City has closed to all but emergencies; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: For details of the latest position on routine admissions, the hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the East Hertfordshire health authority.

Dental Rates Study Group

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will deposit in the Library paper DRSG 86/16 by the dental rates study group.

Mrs. Currie: Numbered papers in the DRSG series are not normally placed in the Library but are made available on request after the conclusion of the group's work each year. However, as requested by the hon. Member, I have arranged for a copy of DRSG 86/16 to be placed in the Library.

Disabled People (Library Facilities)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what representations he has received from the Cassette Library for the Blind and Handicapped concerning the provisions of library facilities for people unable to read; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what assistance is provided by his Department towards the Cassette Library for the Blind and Handicapped; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he is satisfied that local authorities are fulfilling their duty under section 2(1)*(b)* of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 to make arrangements for library services for people with disabilities, in particular for books on cassette for people unable to read; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: It is for local authorities to satisfy themselves as to what is necessary to meet the needs of individual disabled people under section 2(1)*(b)* of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

The cassette library of recorded books (CALIBRE) received grants under section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 from 1976 to March 1987. Although further requests and representations have been made, when the last grant was awarded it was made clear then that no commitment could be given to further funding.

Disabled People

Mr. O'Brien asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) on 26 March, *Official Report*, column *260*, whether he has now received the report from Wakefield district council relating to telephone attachments and rentals; and if he will publish the figures in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Major: For the year ending 31 March 1986, Wakefield district council social services department provided no telephone attachments, but funded 924 rentals.

Claims (Processing)

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give details of the average time taken to process claims at Social Security offices in Chorlton, Rusholme and Sale for the most recent period for which figures are available.

Mr. Lyell: The average time taken to process claims to social security benefits is shown in the table. Figures, in days, are for the four weeks ending 7 April 1987:

	Chorlton	*Rusholme*	*Sale*
Supplementary Benefit	8	6	4
Sickness/Invalidity Benefit	7	9	14
Maternity Allowance	9	7	11
Retirement Pension	63	33	41

Waiting Lists

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the monthly waiting list for the North West regional health authority from 1974 to the most recent date for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member all the information he seeks in precisely the form requested. The information available centrally is given in the table. Over this period the number of in-patient cases treated increased by 27·6 per cent. from 483,978 to 617,628. For the rest of the information he seeks, the hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of the North Western regional health authority.

Number of cases on in-patient waiting list at 30 June[1], 31 December, 31 March, 30 September, North Western region

Month	*Year*	*Number*
June	1974	59,475
December	1974	60,236
June	1975	59,311
September	1975	58,168
December	1975	68,503
March	1976	68,149
September	1976	66,893
December	1976	67,930
March	1977	66,366
September	1977	64,560
December	1977	65,639
March	1978	63,532
September	1978	63,123
December	1978	66,069
March	1979	77,368
September	1979	71,948
December	1979	70,192
March	1980	68,976
September	1980	65,513
December	1980	62,997
March	1981	62,394
September	1981	60,252
December	1981	59,752
March	1982	61,357
September	1982	69,697
December	1982	68,767
March	1983	64,853
September	1983	62,525
December	1983	60,745
March	1984	59,289
September	1984	59,417
December	1984	59,031
March	1985	58,600
September	1985	58,465
December	1985	56,927
March	1986	60,242
September	1986	61,143

[1] Statistical return discontinued 1976.

Pensions

Mrs. Sally Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the rate of decline in the real purchasing power of the pension for a married couple between the date of implementation of the increase in 1975 and the date when the 1976 increase took effect; and what was the rate of decline in the real purchasing power of the pension for a married couple between the date of the implementation of the increase in 1985 and the date when the 1986 increase took effect.

Mr. Major: By the date of the November 1976 pension uprating, the real value of the November 1975 pension rate for a married couple had fallen by 15 per cent. By the date of the July 1986 uprating, the real value of the November 1985 pension uprating had fallen by 1·7 per cent.

Diabetics (Syringes)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when disposable syringes for diabetics are to be made available on National Health Service prescription; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We hope to make an announcement on this shortly.

Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Health Authority (Contracting Out)

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will call for an investigation into the contracting out of work by the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale health authority to Gisburne park hospital using resources provided to reduce waiting lists; and if he will make a statement on the part played in the negotiations by the senior officer of the authority who subsequently took an appointment with the Gisburne park hospital.

Mrs. Currie: Two projects have been agreed which will remove 255 patients from waiting lists at a cost of £195,746. No senior officer involved in the contracting out of this work has taken up employment with the Gisburne park hospital. If the hon. Member has concerns about these arrangements he should raise these with the chairman of the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale health authority.

Post-Medical Officers (Health Controls)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Service if he will list the diseases which may be used by port medical officers as grounds for restricting entry into Britain.

Mr. Newton: The conditions which, in certain circumstances, could justify a medical inspector recommending to an immigration officer that the admission to Britain of a person referred to him was undesirable include:—

(i) mental disorder which might cause a breach of public order, or threaten the safety of the public;
(ii) drug dependence;
(iii) diseases which endanger the health of persons in this country;
(iv) other medical or physical conditions which may require medical treatment or affect the person's ability to support himself or his relatives.

All cases are considered on their merits. Special provisions applicable to European Community nationals are listed in the annex to European Community directive 64/21, a copy of which is being placed in the Library.

Nurses

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what steps he is taking to encourage qualified nurses not working in nursing to take up employment in the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what steps he is taking to encourage an increase in the number of men entering the nursing profession; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The recent pay increases for nurses ranging from 5 per cent. to 12·7 per cent. are largest for qualified staff and reflect the need to recruit and retain staff in these grades. Health authorities, which are responsible for recruitment, have been asked to increase male recruitment, organise "Back to Nursing" campaigns, including refresher training courses and to give more opportunities for flexible working arrangements, part-time working and job sharing.

Other current central activities which have implications for recruitment and retention of qualified nursing staff include a joint DHSS/NHS working group on equal opportunities for women. In particular, it is expected that it will make recommendations for management of the career break. The management and staff sides of the Nursing and Midwifery Staff Negotiating Council are reviewing the nursing clinical grading structure. The council's aim is to develop a structure which is appropriate to current and future needs. Once the council has agreed a new grading structure, it will be for the review body to recommend appropriate pay levels. The Department also produces material for local recruitment campaigns and is currently reviewing its national nurse "image" advertising (which already features the work of male nurses) with a view to emphasising the opportunities for qualified staff to return to nursing.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what representations he has received from nurses about nurses' pay and conditions since the announcement on 23 April of the Government's response to the 1987 recommendations of the Review Body for Nurses and Midwives Remuneration; and if he will make a statement about nursing shortages *(a)* in London, *(b)* in the South-East Thames region, and *(c)* in other parts of the United Kindom;

(2) when the National Health Service Management Board steering group will report on its study of nursing services in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Elderly People (Home Help and Day Care Services)

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his policy towards requiring elderly people in receipt of supplementary benefit to pay charges for local authority home help and day care services; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: It is for the individual local authorities to decide on the charging arrangements for domiciliary and day care services. We would expect authorities to take account of both the costs of services and the financial position of those using them (whether in receipt of supplementary benefit or not) in determining charges. Under section 17 of the Health and Social Services and Social Security Adjudications Act 1983, where a user of the services satisfies the authority that his means are insufficient to meet its charges he shall not be required to pay more than it appears to the authority reasonably practicable for him to pay.

Health Care (Inequalities)

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking aimed specifically at reducing social inequalities in health and health care delivery.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 10 April at columns *506-507*.

Economic Deflators

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing figures for the gross domestic product deflator, and for the National Health Service pay and prices deflator for each year since 1974, and figures for the cumulative difference between those two deflators as at each year from a 1974 base.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Diabetics

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the number of diabetics who died from kidney failure during each of the most recent five years for which he has figures; and if he will make a statement about the availability of kidney transplants for diabetics within the National Health Service.

Mrs. Currie: Reliable information is not available on the number of diabetics who die from kidney failure.

The renal transplant programme as a whole is currently constrained by a shortage of donor kidneys. A working party under the chairmanship of Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, President of the Royal College of Physicians, is currently examining ways of increasing the availability of organs, and we expect to receive its advice during the summer. The suitability of a patient for transplantation is a matter for the clinician concerned.

NHS (Staff Shortages)

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement about recruitment, retention and shortages of *(a)* hospital pharmacists, *(b)* laboratory staff, *(c)* secretaries, and *(d)* record clerks in the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton: Such information is not collected centrally, but we are aware of some problems affecting certain grades in particular areas. Apart from action by local management, measures to alleviate these problems have been taken or are under discussion in the appropriate Whitley councils.

Benefits

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give, for a single person, the basic rate of unemployment and supplementary benefits, broken down to component amounts and the areas those amounts are intended to cover.

Mr. Lyell: The standard weekly rate of unemployment benefit is £31·45 for a person under pension age. This benefit is intended to provide a measure of compensation for loss of earnings for people who become unemployed and is not related to a claimant's needs or requirements.

The principal basic weekly rates of supplementary benefit for a single unemployed person are as follows:

Circumstances	*Rate* £
1. Householder;	30·40
2. Member of someone else's household; aged 18 years and over	24·35
3. Member of someone else's household; aged 16-17 years	18·75

These rates are not made up of separately calculated component parts but are composite amounts intended to cover all items of normal expenditure on day-to-day living expenses. It is for the claimant to decide how much is allocated to particular areas of expenditure.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the total number of claimants applying to his Department for benefit resident in *(a)* Orkney and *(b)* Shetland for each year from 1979 to 1986.

Mr. Lyell: Separate figures are not available for Orkney and Shetland, nor are they available prior to 1983-84. The total number of benefit claims made by residents in Orkney and Shetland are included in the figures for the Lerwick and Wick offices as follows:

Lerwick ILO Benefit Claims received

Benefit	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Sickness/Invalidity benefit	489	439	555	353
Injury Benefit	15	—	—	—
Maternity Benefit	276	194	235	255
[1]Retirement Pension	669	1,304	1,091	922
Widows Benefit	14	22	23	47
Death Grants	230	226	239	208
Disablement Benefit	7	18	7	8
Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension	7	31	—	—
Severe Disablement Allowance	—	—	12	5
[1]Supplementary Benefit	1,488	1,802	1,616	1,662

Wick ILO Benefit Claims received

Benefit	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Sickness/Invalidity Benefit	341	1,061	1,226	876
Injury Benefit	—	—	—	—
Maternity Benefit	194	327	440	465
[1]Retirement Pension	1,121	2,429	3,520	3,119
Widows Benefit	23	55	81	77
Death Grants	206	392	767	675
Disablement Benefit	1	6	18	22
Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension	5	22	—	—
Severe Disablement Allowance	—	—	66	20
[1]Supplementary Benefit	5,172	5,390	5,499	5,182

[1] Decisions processed not claims received.

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are his latest estimates of family income supplement and housing benefit take-up.

Mr. Lyell: I have today placed in the Library copies of reports presenting take-up estimates for Family Income Supplement in 1983-84 and Housing Benefit in 1984. Full explanations are included of the methods and assumptions used in the estimates. Copies of the reports are also available on request from DHSS at Room 536A, New Court, 48 Carey Street, London WC2A 2LS, Telephone Number 01-831-6111 extension 2556.

Benefits

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people are presently in receipt of supplementary benefit in Coventry; what is the total number of people that benefit has to support, namely, claimants plus dependants; what were the comparable figures for 1979; what is the percentage change; and what percentage change has taken place in the number of his Department's staff over the same period.

Mr. Lyell: The city of Coventry is covered by two of the Department's local offices — Coventry (east) and Coventry (west) — but their boundaries are not conterminous.

The table shows the numbers of people receiving supplementary benefit from those offices on the latest date for which information is available and on a comparable date in 1979:

	15 May 1979	*5 May 1987*	*Increase (per cent.)*
Coventry (east)	12,256	22,012	79·6
Coventry (west)	9,832	17,877	81·8

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

I regret that information about the total number of people in Coventry supported by supplementary benefit is not available.

The percentage change in staff allocated to supplementary benefit over the period 1979 to 1987 is as follows:

	Per cent.
Coventry (east)	+ 48·4
Coventry (west)	+ 74·1

Direct comparisons between numbers of claimants and staff are misleading as work loads vary considerably by type and duration of claim and the action that has to be taken. All these factors vary over time as a result of legislative, policy and procedural changes. Examples of such changes are the introduction of housing benefit and postal claim forms.

Telford District Hospital

Mr. Hawksley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the new Telford district hospital will open; and to what extent immediate use will be made of the accident and emergency facilities.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Waiting Lists

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Socal Services if he will give figures for the bids for 1987-88 for money from the waiting list fund he announced on 6 November 1986 by *(a)* regional health authorities in total, *(b)* each regional health authority, *(c)* district health authorities in total and *(d)* each district health authority.

Mr. Newton: Regional health authorities initially submitted bids in December 1986 for projects to be supported from the 1987-88 allocation of the waiting list fund. The priority order of these bids was determined by regions. Some projects were later revised in the light of further discussions locally and with the Department. Since an important part of the process was to assess regional and district proposals to identify those which were best targeted and most cost-effective, it necessarily entailed districts putting to regions, and regions to the Department, bids for projects totalling in excess of the allocation for the year. The extent to which a district's or a region's proposed projects exceeded in total the planning guideline given in November varied according to local decision and comparisons would have no significance. Lists of the projects to be funded as agreed by regions in March 1987 have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services to what extent figures for numbers on hospital waiting lists after 1 April 1987 will be comparable with those for numbers on hospital waiting lists before 1 April 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as posible.

Telephone Information Services

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the health topics for which there are telephone advice or information services wholly or partly subsidised by his Department; and if he has any plans to extend the range of telephone information services he subsidises.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Prescriptions

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to assess whether students or other young people under the age of 21 years should have free prescriptions or free dental treatment wholly or partly on the basis of their parents' income; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to change the current arrangements.

Ward Closures

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the temporary hospital ward closures of which his Department is aware since 1 September 1986 giving, in each case, the hospital and health authority involved, the number of beds closed, the period of closure and the reason for the closure.

Mrs. Currie: The day-to-day management of local hospital services is a matter for district health authorities. Whilst for different reasons we may from time to time learn in general terms of temporary ward closures we do not keep a central record which is comprehensive in either coverage or detail.

Normacol Standard

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make Normacol Standard available again on a National Health Service prescription.

Mr. Newton: At its meeting on 28 April the advisory committee on National Health Service drugs considered a submission from the makers of Normacol Standard for the drug to be returned to National Health Service prescription. We are considering the committee's recommendations.

Tattoo Removal

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 30 April to the hon. Member for Leicester, East, *Official Report*, column *221*, if any information about waiting lists for operations for tattoo removal is held centrally; if he will take steps to collect detailed information from each health authority on this subject in future; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Waiting list information is held centrally by consultant department and not according to intended method of treatment. While individual consultants and health authorities need to be aware of the composition of their waiting lists, information in this detail is not required nationally.

Family Planning and Well Women Clinics (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey of 10 April, *Official Report*, column *507*, if he will state in the *Official Report* his response to representations he has received from the North Hertfordshire community health council and from members of the public about the closure of family planning clinics and well women clinics in North Hertfordshire district health authority.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Speech Therapists

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement about recruitment, retention, shortages and pay of speech therapists.

Mr. Newton: Information about recruitment, retention and any shortages is not collected centrally, but we are not aware of widespread problems affecting funded posts. Pay is a matter for the Whitley councils.

St. Bartholomew's Hospital (Admissions)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if the decision by St. Bartholomew's hospital to bar the admission of patients from outside its district will lead to a reallocation of funds to the areas affected.

Mr. Newton: The allocation of resources to district health authorities within a region is a matter for the regional health authority concerned. Patient flows between regions are taken into account in allocating resources to regional health authorities.

Kidney Dialysis

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what standards have been laid down by the European Community for kidney dialysis; and if a directive to this effect has been issued from Brussels by the Commission.

Mrs. Currie: No directive on this subject has been agreed by the European Community, but measures for the protection of dialysis patients by minimising the exposure to aluminium are set out in a resolution adopted in June 1986 by the Council of the European Communities and the representatives of the member states, meeting within the Council. The resolution was published in the *Official Journal* of the European Communities (OJ No. C204, 23 July 1986, page 16) which is available in the Library.

Chief Adjudication Officer (Report)

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will make available the second annual report of the chief adjudication officer; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: The report is being published today. The publication of the report follows from the provisions of the Health and Social Services and Social Security Adjudications Act 1983, which sought to improve the quality of social security adjudication by a number of measures, including the requirement for the chief adjudication officer to report annually to the Secretary of State on the standards of social security adjudication. We are grateful to the chief adjudication officer for the efforts which he and his staff have put into the report. The report makes a number of constructive suggestions which we shall consider carefully.

Mentally Disabled People (Sexuality and Contraception)

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in the light of the recent House of Lords decision on sterilisation, he will reconsider his response to the recommendation of the Social Services Committee in its Second Report of Session 1984-85 on Community Care, HC 13-I, that his Department institute an independent expert review of law and practice on sexuality and contraception in relation to mentally disabled people.

Mr. Newton: I understand that the authors of the Standing Medical Advisory Committee's handbook of contraceptive practice are already considering for their next edition what guidance on contraception might be given to mentally disordered people. Before deciding whether any further action is appropriate, the Government think it right to allow time for public discussion of the implications of the recent House of Lords judgment, concerning the sterilisation of a young girl with a mental handicap.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list by his Department's offices how many people applied for the extra £5 payment for exceptionally cold weather allowance made available for the weeks beginning 12 and 19 January; how many applications have been processed; and how many payments have been made.

Mr. Major: I shall let the hon. Member have the information that is available as soon as possible.

Clinical Services (Competitive Tendering)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement about his policy in relation to the scope for and the applicability of competitive tendering for clinical services generally.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Post-operative Convalescence

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what changes have been made in policy or practice at departmental, regional or district level in relation to the provision on the National Health Service of convalescence after operations;

(2) on what terms and under what conditions convalescence is available on the National Health Service after *(a)* hysterectomies and *(b)* other operations.

Mrs. Currie: Departmental policy remains that post-operative care should be available under the National Health Service for those patients for whom it is prescribed as medically necessary by a hospital consultant. The level and extent of provision of convalescence beds is a matter for local decision. Modern concepts of patient care and rehabilitation have resulted in a diminishing demand for convalescence in its traditional form.

Patients (Notes)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he has received reports of proposals by hospital consultants to charge for summaries of patients' notes held on computer to which access is required under the Data Protection Act;

(2) whether his Department has given any advice about the charges to be levied by consultants within the National Health Service for the production of summaries of patients' notes held on computer to which access is required under the Data Protection Act.

Mrs. Currie: I am aware of the press reports speculating about the level of charge that might be made to hospital patients wishing to have information from their computerised case notes. The maximum amount of any fee which might be charged by a data user to a data subject for access to personal information held on computer, will be prescribed by regulations to be made by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. It is not expected that the fee will be so high as generally to deter data subjects from exercising their rights.

Consideration is currently being given to the administrative procedures which may be required in the National Health Service hospital service to implement access. The question of charges for work undertaken by consultants has not yet been considered. To the extent that such charges may exceed the maximum prescribed fee, these will not be passed on to the patient.

Kidney Patients

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many people were receiving dialysis treatment at National Health Service hospitals in the United Kingdom on 31 March;

(2) how many people are now awaiting dialysis treatment from National Health Service hospitals; and what is the average time a person has to wait to receive such treatment.

Mrs. Currie: Information on the numbers of people receiving dialysis treatment is collected on an annual basis by the European Dialysis and Transplant Association. The latest figures available are for the year ending 31 December 1985, when a total of 12,154 patients were being treated. This is a 97 per cent. increase on the 1979 total.

The length of time a patient has to wait for treatment and the numbers awaiting treatment are not recorded centrally.

Abortions

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what representations he has received about the decision of Brent health authority to put its requirements for abortion services out to competitive tender;

(2) if he will make a statement about his policy in relation to the scope for and the applicability of competitive tendering for abortion services;

(3) if he will list the health authorities known to his Department to have contracted out their abortion services giving in each case the organisation and the clinic providing the service and the cost to the health authority;

(4) if he will list the health authorities known to his Department to have engaged in competitive tendering exercises for their abortion services;

(5) if he will give for each year since 1979 the total National Health Service expenditure on abortion services provided *(a)* in-house, *(b)* through charitable organisations and *(c)* through commercial organisations.

Mr. Newton: The statistical information requested is not available, since health authorities are not required to report on contractual arrangements they may make about clinical services with the private or voluntary sectors, and their accounts as submitted to the Department do not show separately the amount spent on abortions.

I understand that Brent health authority already has an arrangement whereby some abortions are undertaken on an agency basis by a private nursing home approved for this purpose under the 1967 Abortion Act. It has now invited tenders for such an arrangement. I am not aware of any representations about the matter.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each year since 1979 the total number of abortions on the National Health Service provided *(a)* in-house, *(b)* through charitable organisations and *(c)* through commercial organisations.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Infant Deaths (Croydon)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about infant deaths in Croydon.

Mrs. Currie: We have received one letter from an hon. Member on this subject.

Hospital Services, East Hertfordshire

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the ability of the hospital services in east Hertfordshire to cope with a major outbreak of infection or major emergency.

Mrs. Currie: Arrangements to cope with a major outbreak of infection or major emergency in east Hertfordshire are in the first instance the responsibility of the East Hertfordshire Health Authority. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman should he require details of any local contingency planning.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he now expects the first breast cancer training centres to open.

Mrs. Currie: The location of four breast cancer screening centres to provide a national training facility has been discussed with regional health authorities. An announcement will be made very shortly.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he now expects the regional breast cancer screening service in each region to come into operation.

Mrs. Currie: Each regional health authority has been asked to have at least one screening centre, each serving a population of about half a million, in operation by March 1988. General guidance on how they should set up and organise their first screening centres was issued on 31 March.

The location of these centres should be decided before the end of May. Regional health authorities have also been asked to submit plans before the end of this year to extend the number of centres over the following two years to cover all eligible women by March 1990.

Radiotherapy Unit, Southend

55. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many letters he has now received from the general public about the proposal by the North East Thames regional health authority to close the radiotherapy unit at Southend; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We have received 15 letters which have been referred by hon. Members, together with about 1,970 letters direct from members of the public.

If Ministers are required to make a final decision on the proposal, we will take into account all representations which have been received.

Hospital Chaplains

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospital chaplains have been officially appointed in each health region in England and Wales, broken down by ecclesiastical denomination.

Mrs. Currie: The appointment of hospital chaplains is a matter for health authorities. Information on the number of part-time chaplains is not held centrally. Although we estimate there may be over 4,000 such appointments in England, there are no details of the denominations from which they come. The numbers of full-time chaplains in England are given in the table; three are from Free Church denominations and one is Roman Catholic, while the remainder are Anglicans. Figures for Wales are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Numbers of whole-time chaplains employed in the NHS at 30 September

Region	*Numbers*
Northern RHA	10
Yorkshire RHA	10
Trent RHA	15
East Anglian RHA	4
North West Thames RHA	18
North East Thames RHA	16
South East Thames RHA	20
South West Thames RHA	17
Wessex RHA	13
Oxford RHA	6
South Western RHA	7
West Midlands RHA	18
Mersey RHA	10
North Western RHA	9
London PG(T)	3
England Total	176

Source: DHSS Annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report*, hospitals, broken down by health region in England and Wales, whose annual turnover of in-patients averages more than 25 per cent. of people of a religious faith other than Christian and which do not have the official services of a hospital chaplain whose denomination is non-Christian.

Mrs. Currie: Information about the religious faith of hospital patients in England is not held centrally. I understand that most hospital chaplains are currently from Christian denominations, but I would encourage health authorities to meet sympathetically any requests for appointments from other faiths.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to improve the provision of chaplaincy services to non-Christian hospital in-patients.

Mrs. Currie: This is a matter for health authorities in the first instance. However, I recognise that we now live in a multi-faith society, not all of whose members will share the Christian concept of a hospital chaplain. I would encourage authorities to ensure that their chaplaincy services provide as appropriate for all faiths.

Medical Students

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many British medical students, who had not passed their university final examinations, qualified as doctors during the last five years by virtue of obtaining the licence in medicine and surgery of the Society of Apothecaries of London.

Mr. Newton: This information is not collected by the Department.

Deaths (Statistics)

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what have been the number of deaths from *(a)* drowning, *(b)* road accidents and *(c)* horse riding in each of the last 10 years in England and Wales.

Mrs. Currie: The information is shown in the table.

Deaths from drowning, road accidents and horse-riding, England and Wales 1976-86

	Drowning (994·1)[2]	*Road accidents (E810-E829)*[2]	*Horse riding*[3]
1976	1,188	6,115	10
1977	1,081	5,943	8
1978	1,090	6,772	20
1979	1,156	5,927	8
1980	1,194	5,905	11
1981	1,134	4,150	10
1982	1,116	5,380	19
1983	1,077	5,221	18
1984	971	5,172	23
1985	985	4,973	15
1986[1]	908	4,895	13

[1] Provisional. Excludes registered deaths to non-residents of England and Wales.

[2] International Classification of Diseases 8th and 9th Revisions.

[3] Figures taken from a special OPCS study of sporting and leisure deaths. Because of a change in the collection of this data in 1982, figures prior to this year are not strictly comparable to those after; (for details of the changes in 1982, see OPCS Monitor DH4 84/3, "Fatal Accidents occuring during sporting and leisure activities, 1982".)

Incontinence Advisers (Training)

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will examine the quality of education training for incontinence advisers; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will examine the educational documentation available for the training of incontinence advisers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: It is for health authorities to determine the training requirements of nurses as incontinence advisers. I understand that the English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting, the statutory body responsible for the provision of the education and training of nurses, provides the material for a course on the promotion of continence and the management of incontinence.

Organ Donations

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what discussions have taken place regarding required request for donations of cadaver organs; what estimate has been made in the possible increase in the supply of such organs which may follow the introduction of a system of required request; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I anticipate that the "required request" approach to organ donation will be considered by the working party under the chairmanship of Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, president of the Royal College of Physicians, which is at present examining ways of increasing the availability of cadaver organs. No reliable estimate is available at this stage of the possible increase in supply which might result from the introduction of a "required request" system.

Clinics (Closures)

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about the planned closure of family planning and well-women services in Lewisham and north Southwark; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Seven representations have been received about family planning and well woman services in Lewisham and north Southwark; six from staff employed by the health authority and one from a member of the public.

I understand that Lewisham and North Southwark health authority will be discussing possible changes to these and other services at its meeting on 18 May. If any significant changes are proposed by the health authority they will be the subject of full consultation in the normal way. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the health authority for further information.

Day Nurseries

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which local authorities have reduced the number of places in day nurseries since 1979; and what has been the percentage reduction in each case.

Mrs. Currie: Thirty-six local authorities in England reduced the number of their day nursery places between 1981 and 1986; the percentage reduction in each case is given in the table. Detailed information for 1979 and 1980 is not readily available.

The information relating to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is a matter for my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Wales and Northern Ireland and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Percentage change in local authority provided day nursery places for authorities which reduced their provision between 1981 and 1986

Local authority	*Percentage change 1981–86*[1]
Durham	−13·3
North Tyneside	[2]−1·1
South Tyneside	−39·0
Sheffield	−5·4
Wakefield	[2]−71·4
Cheshire	−1·8
Bolton	−12·6
Oldham	−8·6
Stockport	−7·9
Knowsley	−35·7
St. Helens	[2]−9·1
Wirral	−4·5
Coventry	−24·1
Nottinghamshire	−1·8
Berkshire	[2]−62·7
Cambridgeshire	−2·8
Hertfordshire	−46·4
Suffolk	[2]−100·0
Hammersmith	−9·3
Wandsworth	−6·6
Westminster	−8·0
Barking	−10·3
Ealing	−2·8
Enfield	−4·8
Havering	−18·4
Hillingdon	−19·6
Merton	−14·4
Newham	−1·2
Richmond upon Thames	−4·6
Waltham Forest	−1·6
Dorset	−4·8
Hampshire	−7·1
Kent	[2]−53·1
East Sussex	−40·9
Devon	[2]−75·7
Gloucestershire	[2]−54·7

[1] For some authorities the percentage change is based on estimated figures for 1981 and 1986.

[2] In these authorities there were less than 100 day nursery places provided by the local authority in 1986 and so the percentage changes are based on relatively small numbers.

Mentally Handicapped People

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress is being made in the use of core and cluster housing for former patients of mental and mental handicap hospitals who are now living in the community.

Mrs. Currie: There are no central statistics on the numbers of former patients in mental illness and mental handicap hospitals who are now living in core and cluster housing schemes. It is not possible, therefore, to indicate progress in numerical terms.

Core and cluster housing is one of a range of accommodation options available to health and local authorities as they develop modern local services. Other forms of provision, such as residential care homes, hostels, group homes, supported lodgings and ordinary flats and houses, all have a part to play in creating the accessible and comprehensive services that our policy envisages. The information available to us confirms that authorities are making steady progress in providing these community-oriented services.

One example is the Chichester project, as part of our £16 million care in the community pilot projects exercise, which will provide up to 30 places for former Graylingwell patients in core and cluster housing.

Acid Rain

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what research has been performed in Britain to investigate any possible links between acid deposition and the following ailments: dialysis dementia, dialysis osteomalacia, dialysis dystrophy, and Alzheimer's disease; and if he will summarise the results.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *429*]: Acid rain normally leads to the deposition of mildly acidic substances based on oxides of carbon, nitrogen and sulphur. It is suggested that an increased level of aluminium in water sources may occur because acidic solutions can leach aluminium from the soil, rocks and sediments, but there is no direct evidence of a link between acid rain and aluminium concentrations in water sources. Water undertakers monitor and adjust the level of aluminium in supply to conform with the requirements of European Community directive 80/778 on the quality of water intended for human consumption, and therefore levels in supply generally do not reflect levels in sources.

Aluminium in dialysis fluids is known to be a cause of dialysis dementia, dialysis osteomalacia and dialysis dystrophy. So that dialysis patients may be safeguarded, water undertakings have been asked to notify health authorities if, for technical reasons, aluminium levels in water supplies are raised; in these circumstances, water used for dialysis would be expected to be treated to remove excess aluminium.

Aluminium is not readily absorbed through the digestive tract, and from this source is not considered to have adverse health effects on the general population. The suggestion that it may be related to Alzheimer's disease is being investigated by a number of Medical Research Council research units. The MRC is the main Government-funded agency for United Kingdom biomedical research receiving a grant-in-aid from the Department of Education and Science. The director of the Medical Research Council neuroendocrinology unit at Newcastle recently stated that there is no evidence that aluminium by itself is the cause of Alzheimer's disease, and that much evidence points to the contrary.

Ambulance Service (London)

Mr. Nigel Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what study has been made of the impact of the reducion in non-emergency ambulance services of the London ambulance service on the administration and efficiency of out-patient departments in hospitals which they serve.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *430*]: I am not aware of any specific study. We would, however, expect all health authorities as part of their normal management responsibility to monitor the efficiency of the arrangements for bringing patients to out-patient departments and to discuss problems with the appropriate ambulance service.

I understand that the London ambulance service is now meeting all requests for non-emergency transport. Where there are problems action is being taken to improve the quality of the service, that is, to ensure patients arrive on time for appointments and do not have long waits for transport home.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

Mr. Chapman asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 May.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Guinness plc

Q94. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if she will acquire for the Library at 10 Downing street a copy of "Is Guinness Good for You—the Bid for Distillers—the Inside Story", by Peter Pugh, published by Financial Training; and if she will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's role in the Guinness takeover affair.

The Prime Minister: No.

Darlington

Q165. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Prime Minister whether she has any plans to pay an official visit to Darlington.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the latest information he has about the effect of neighbourhood watch schemes in Chatham.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There are currently 32 neighbourhood watch schemes in Chatham, covering some 5,250 households. One of the first schemes in Kent was introduced in 1984 at Chatham's Davis estate, covering some 1,250 households. Since its introduction there has been a 57 per cent. reduction in all reported crime including a 58 per cent. reduction in burglaries. Many of the other schemes now active in Chatham have been initiated by local communities following the success of the pioneering scheme at the Davis estate.

Mr. Lawler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the effect of neighbourhood watch schemes in the Bradford area.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There are now some 45 neighbourhood watch schemes in the Bradford area and there are some encouraging signs of success. For example, in the Wycke area, particularly notable for the close involvement of special constables in neighbourhood watch, there were four burglaries in the first nine months of 1986 compared with 24 in the same period of 1985. Auto crime has also shown a downward trend. Thefts of motor vehicles are down by 41 per cent. and thefts from motor vehicles are down by 11 per cent.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Hurd: Over the past three years the Home Office has advertised in every national newspaper and in a wide range of regional, local and ethnic minority newspapers. However, information is not readily available in the form requested and could not be provided without disproportionate cost.

Firearms (Frontier Controls)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration was given by the Council of Ministers to the proposals by the Commission to remove frontier controls on the movement of firearms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: No such proposals have yet been placed before the Council of Ministers. The proposal for an EC directive dealing with the movement of firearms across internal Community frontiers was discussed at the meeting of Trevi Ministers on 28 April. We agreed to inform the European Commission of our view that any new measures to facilitate the free movement of goods within the Community should not inhibit national authorities making such checks as they thought appropriate on the movement of firearms across Community frontiers.

Tamils

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will update his reply of 7 April, *Official Report*, column *130*, regarding release of Tamil detainees, given to the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East.

Mr. Waddington: On 11 May, 23 of the 64 Sri Lankans who sought entry on arrival on 13 February were still detained in the following places:

	Number
Harmondsworth	5
Foston Hall	10
Latchmere House	8

Since my reply of 7 April, temporary admission was authorised for a further eight on the following dates:

Five on 16 April 1987.
Three on 24 April 1987.

One was granted bail on 7 May 1987.

Interception of Communications

Mr. Alexander asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications have been made to the Interception of Communication Tribunal since 10 April 1986; and in how many of these cases the tribunal concluded that there had been a contravention of sections 2 to 5 of the Interception of Communications Act 1985.

Mr. Hurd: There have been 41 applications for a tribunal investigation under section 7(2) of the Interception of Communications Act 1985 during the period 10 April 1986 to 9 April 1987. Investigation of 36 applications has been completed: on no occasion has the tribunal concluded that there has been a contravention of sections 2 to 5 of the Act.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Tourism (VAT)

56. **Mr. Ashby** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect on the tourist industry of the extension announced in the Budget of value added tax to the gross margins earned by tour operators on sales tours within the European Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: Incoming and internal tourists are already charged United Kingdom VAT on the full price paid for goods and services liable at the standard rate of tax. The scheme should not affect the total amount of VAT chargeable by the United Kingdom sector of the tourist industry, but it will affect the way in which the tax is accounted for to Customs and Excise by tour operators supplying United Kingdom tours.

Outgoing tourists proceeding to other member states and buying from United Kingdom tour operators will pay a small element of United Kingdom VAT for the first time from 1 April 1988. It is difficult to predict accurately the effect on tour operators' prices because the Association of British Travel Agents has been unable to supply an estimated weighted average of what its members' gross margins on standard-rated supplies will be. However, assuming that the extra VAT is passed on in full, it is estimated that the price of typical packages to destinations in other member states will be increased by about 1 per cent. This is unlikely to have any significant effect on the number of packages sold.

Finance Bill

Mr. Yeo asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the Government's intentions in relation to the Finance Bill.

Mr. Lawson: The Government propose to reintroduce all those provisions which have had to be left out of the shortened Finance Bill as early as possible in the next Parliament. For those measures which would have taken effect from Royal Assent to the original Bill, the operative date will be Royal Assent to the new legislation. In other cases it is intended to retain the operative date proposed in the original Bill.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Aid

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish for Great Britain and for each region, for Scotland and Wales, his latest figure for the amounts paid in regional development grants in the financial year 1986-87; and if he will publish his estimate for the amount he expects to spend in Great Britain and for each region, Scotland and Wales, on regional development grants in 1987-88.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Provisional figures for payments of regional development grants in 1986-87 are as follows:

Area	*£ million*
North East	89·8
North West	113·7
Yorkshire and Humberside	27·2
East Midlands	8·4
South West	14·6
Scotland	170·0
Wales	88·9
Great Britain Total	512·6

Provision for expenditure on RDGs in 1987-88, as set out in the Supply Estimates, is as follows:

	£ million
England	108·5
Scotland	69·0
Wales	33·6
Total	211·1

Notes:

(1) All figures are gross, before deducting recoveries and EC receipts.

(2) Estimates for future RDG expenditure are produced only for England as a whole and are not broken down by region.

As the Prime Minister pointed out in her letter of 12 February to the hon. Gentleman, this projected fall in expenditure is the result of the Government's 1984 decision to replace the old RDG scheme, which supported capital investment without reference to employment, by a new and more cost-effective scheme linked to the creation of jobs.

Satellite Information Services

Mr. Hayes asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the various links between the big four bookmakers, Satellite Information Services and their position in the racing and betting industries.

Mr. Howard: The Director General of Fair Trading is currently considering whether he should make a complex monopoly reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission under the provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973 in relation to the supply of off-course bookmaking services. Complaints from a number of bodies connected with horse and greyhound racing (including the National Greyhound Racing Club Ltd. and smaller bookmakers) about the possible effects of the Satellite Information Services operation are being taken into account as one of the matters on which the Director General's decision will be based.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Butcher: The information is not readily available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Cosmetics

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why the Council of Ministers decided to harmonise legislation on cosmetic products; if he will provide details of the form and content of the agreed Community labelling which cosmetic products will now be required to display; and if he will make a statement on the cosmetic products which are covered by the legislation.

Mr. Howard: There is an important international trade in cosmetics, and the EC cosmetic products directive is intended to remove barriers to trade in the Community and to ensure that the public throughout the Community are protected from dangerous ingredients. The directive operates by prohibiting the use of certain substances in cosmetics, specifying those which may be used, but with restrictions and specifying warning labelling where necessary. Cosmetic products covered by the directive are all those applied to the external surface of the body to clean, perfume, decorate or maintain it.

Radio Paging Service

Mr. Peter Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will increase the radio spectrum allocation available to the national radio paging service operated by British Telecommunications.

Mr. Pattie: Not at present, but, in anticipation of growing needs as customer demand expands and services develop, I have earmarked an additional channel for future use by the BT service, subject to the company demonstrating to my satisfaction that it has a commercial need and to any other conditions which are generally applicable at the time. I would expect to seek the advice of the Director General of Telecommunications on these questions. I do not expect the additional channel to be brought into commercial use until BT's competitors have had the opportunity to establish themselves in the market.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what moneys are owed by his Department to the London Residuary Body in respect of Greater London council activities prior to abolition.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *23*]: A detailed answer could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, if there are any such moneys I have no reason for believing they are significant.

Komatsu (Hydraulic Excavators)

Sir Hugh Rossi asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to the answer of 6 May, *Official Report*, column *418*, about hydraulic excavators, what information is available to his Department about the quantity and value of components imported by Komatsu in any recent period.

Mr. Alan Clark [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *27*]: Information relating to individual importers is held by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise, but is not normally made available to anyone outside that Department. Components for hydraulic excavators are not separately identified in the *Overseas Trade Statistics*.

Advertising (Space Satellites)

Sir Hugh Rossi asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from observatories and from astronomers about the impact on their work of the launching into space of satellites for the purpose of advertising; if he proposes to take any action; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *418*]: The British National Space Centre has received representations from United Kingdom astronomers, both individually and collectively through the Royal Astronomical Society, on the potential threats to astronomy posed by various plans to launch reflecting satellites into space for advertising or other purposes. The Goverment believe that the launch of such objects should become subject to an internationally accepted code of practice. We are considering, initially with our partners in ESA, how best to pursue such an arrangement.

Unemployment

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish the latest figures available to him of the percentage unemployment rates for each of the 50 regions of the European Community with the worst unemployment rates.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have been asked to reply.

The latest available comparisons of unemployment rates among regions of the European Community, which relate to April 1985, are published in "Basic Statistics of the Community", 24th Edition, which is available in the Library.

ENVIRONMENT

Council Properties (Repairs)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his present estimate of *(a)* the total cost of outstanding repairs to council properties and *(b)* the cost of outstanding repairs to council properties in each local authority.

Mr. Tracey: The 1986 "English House Condition Survey", now being analysed, will provide up-to-date information on the extent of disrepair in council properties nationally. It is for individual local authorities to monitor the repairs outstanding in the properties they own.

Council House Sales

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats were sold by each London borough between May 1979 and May 1986; how many have been sold since then; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The sales of dwellings reported by the London authorities are given in the table.

	April 1979-March 1986		*April 1986-December 1986*	
	All sales	*Flats*	*All sales*	*Flats*
Greater London Council	[1]15,198	[1]1,079	—	—
City of London	807	761	185	183
Barking and Dagenham	6,043	95	n.a.	n.a.
Barnet	3,707	815	498	158
Bexley	2,162	104	227	31
Brent	[1]1,313	[1]182	n.a.	n.a.
Bromley	4,288	434	561	95
Camden	526	349	113	94
Croydon	4,209	[1]166	542	59
Ealing	[1]3,997	[1]417	[1]144	[1]29
Enfield	3,656	483	400	99
Greenwich	2,349	114	[1]203	[1]15
Hackney	[1]561	[1]0	n.a.	n.a.
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,682	678	233	151
Haringey	1,898	232	327	70
Harrow	1,579	181	191	52
Havering	4,829	307	[1]92	[1]7
Hillingdon	[1]3,599	[1]238	n.a.	n.a.
Hounslow	2,285	128	211	48
Islington	[1]826	[1]344	n.a.	n.a.
Kensington and Chelsea	608	382	127	122
Kingston-upon-Thames	1,372	272	107	40
Lambeth	[1]1,045	[1]220	n.a.	n.a.
Lewisham	[1]1,986	[1]170	n.a.	n.a.
Merton	3,053	337	345	76
Newham	[1]2,794	[1]0	n.a.	n.a.
Redbridge	[1]2,511	[1]324	195	78
Richmond-upon-Thames	1,482	334	114	42
Southwark	1,482	377	[1]138	[1]46
Sutton	1,928	268	229	33
Tower Hamlets	[1]492	[1]107	n.a.	n.a.
Waltham Forest	[1]2,226	[1]220	n.a.	n.a.
Wandsworth	8,837	4,913	1,073	867
Westminster	[1]1,395	[1]1,016	338	272

n.a. = Not available.

[1] Incomplete total of sales.

Housing Waiting Lists

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the number of households on local authority housing waiting lists in each London borough, as at 1 April 1987.

Mr. Tracey: The information for 1987 is not yet available.

Livestock Units

Mr. Jackson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are his reasons for extending planning controls to livestock units.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Cockeram) on 13 November 1986, at columns 3-4.

Homelessness

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the number of homeless people in Coventry, the west midlands and nationally at the latest available date, in 1983 and in 1979, respectively.

Mr. Tracey: Local authorities reported accepting responsibility for securing accommodation for the following numbers of households during the years 1979, 1983 and 1986:

Year	*Coventry*	*West Midlands Region*	*England*
1979	151	6,410	57,200
1983	358	9,340	78,240
1986	397	11,780	102,980

The figures for 1979 are not directly comparable to those for 1983 and 1986, because of a change in the method of reporting.

Housing

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his latest estimate of the numbers of houses, also expressed as a percentage of the total, in Coventry, the west midlands and nationally which are *(a)* sub-standard dwellings: unfit, *(b)* fit but lacking one or more basic amenity and *(c)* non-substandard dwellings in need of renovation;

(2) what was Coventry city council's bid to central Government for housing expenditure; and what was his Department's allocation, for each year since 1979, expressed in 1987 prices.

Mr. Tracey: I shall answer this question shortly.

Housing Management

Mr. Knowles asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what further steps the Government have taken to encourage the development of new housing management courses, following their announcement in February of funding for studentships at the Salford centre for housing studies.

Mr. John Patten: Following negotiations between my Department, the Institute of Housing, the University of Bristol and Bristol Polytechnic, a new full-time, two-year postgraduate course in housing studies will be launched at Bristol next autumn. It will meet the necessary professional criteria.

My right hon. Friend intends to provide funding through the Economic and Social Research Council for 15 studentships a year on this course, beginning in 1987. A contribution will also be made towards the setting-up and development costs.

The studentships will provide for maintenance and fees in the first year and for fees only in the second year, when the students are on placement.

This initiative is particularly welcome because of the close co-operation between the university and the polytechnic.

Similar studentships for housing diploma courses are already being provided at the Salford centre for housing studies, the London school of economics and Sheffield polytechnic.

I hope to see more courses which are worthy of our support come forward.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Ridley: My Department, including the Property Services Agency, has advertised nationally in the following newspapers. Local newspapers are listed when they have formed part of the newspaper campaigns. (The lists do not include advertising on recruitment, tendering and statutory orders).

Financial year—1984-85
Subject—Right to Buy

National Newspapers
Daily Mirror
Daily Star
The Sun
Sunday People
News of the World

Local Newspapers
Newcastle Evening Chronicle
Sheffield Star
Hull Daily Mail
Leeds Evening Post
The Standard (London)
Coventry Evening Telegraph
Sandwell Evening Mail
Wolverhampton Express and Star
Huddersfield Daily Examiner
Manchester Evening News

Subject—Rates Act
National Dailies
(Southern Edition only)
Daily Express
Daily Mail
Daily Mirror
Daily Star
The Sun

Guardian

National Dailies
(National)
Daily Telegraph
Times

National Sundays
(Southern edition only)
Mail on Sunday
News of the World
Sunday Express
Sunday Mirror
Sunday People

National Sundays
(National)
Observer
Sunday Telegraph
Sunday Times

Local Newspapers
Brent Recorder
Harrow/Wembley Informer
Independent-Harrow/Wembley
Greenwich Mainline
Greenwich News Shopper
Haringey Advertiser
Haringey Independent
Islington Advertiser
Basildon Evening Echo
Billericay Gazette
Brentwood Gazette and Mid Essex Recorder
Hampstead and District Advertiser
Standard Recorder
Basildon
Billericay
Wickford
Yellow Advertiser—Basildon Edition
Billericay and Wickford Advertiser plus Brentwood Advertiser
Greater London Greater Press Group
Leicester Mercury
Loughborough Echo
Leicester Mail
Leicester Trader
Sunday Extra (Leicester)
North Leicester Shopper
Liverpool Echo
Liverpool Post
Mersey Regional Newspapers
Southport Visitor Group
Wirral Newspaper Group
St. Helens Star Series
Ormskirk Advertiser Group
The News (Portsmouth)
Street Life (Portsmouth-Gosport-Fareham-Waterlooville)
West Sussex Gazette
Swindon Evening Advertiser
Wiltshire Gazette and Herald
Wiltshire Star and Cirencester Advertiser
Swindon and District Messenger
Sheffield Star
Sheffield Morning Telegraph
Sheffield Weekly Gazette
South Yorkshire Times
Worksop Guardian Series
Barnsley Chronicle
Barnsley Independent
Barnsley Chronicle Shopper
Hemsworth and South Elmsall Express
Doncaster Free Press
Doncaster Advertiser
Rotherham and South Yorkshire Advertiser and Messenger

Financial Year—1985-86
Subject—Right to Buy
National Newspapers
Daily Mirror
The Sun
Sunday Mirror
Sunday People
Sunday (News of the World)

Financial Year—1986-87
Subject—Right to Buy
National Newspapers
The Sun
Daily Mirror
Daily Star
News of the World
Sunday Mirror
Sunday People

Parking Fines

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state *(a)* the total amount paid by his Department in 1986 in respect of parking fines incurred by ministerial vehicles and *(b)* provide a breakdown by Government Department in terms of offence, fine, date and location.

Mr. Chope [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *459*]: The sums paid in parking fines in respect of Government car service vehicles in 1986 was £3,134 for 279 offences; a significant reduction on 1985.

The details by Department are as follows:

	Number
Scottish Office	166
Department of Energy	37
Welsh Office	22
Department of Employment	6
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	6
Department of the Environment	5
Department of Transport	6
Department of Health & Social Security	6
Home Office	2
Lord Advocates Office	1
Department of Trade and Industry	4
Management and Personnel Office	7
Northern Ireland Office	1
Department of Education and Science	3
Her Majesty's Treasury	2
Treasury Solicitors	1
Central Office of Information	1
ACAS	1
Ministry of Defence	1
Privy Council	1
	279

A further breakdown could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Residuary Bodies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of consents sought by residuary bodies for disposal of land or buildings for less than the best price offered.

Mr. Chope [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *459*]: Applications have been made in the following cases:

Greater Manchester Residuary Body:
The Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry; 18 residential properties in various districts.
Merseyside Residuary Body:
Land at Caryle Street, Liverpool; Gardners Row Business Centre, Liverpool.
West Yorkshire Residuary Body:
Land at Humboldt Street, Bradford.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of all applications for the acquisition of land made to his Department by residuary bodies since their establishment.

Mr. Chope [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *459*]: Applications were made in the following cases:

London Residuary Body:

A sub-underlease of part of the first floor of 20 Albert Embankment SE1; 551b High Road N17; Land at the rear of Western Arms Public House, W10; Part of 14-20 Glass Street, EC2.

Greater Manchester Residuary Body:

Part of County Hall Car Park, 32-40 Bloom Street, Manchester; sub-lease of 19 and 21 Dicconson Street, Wigan.

Tyne and Wear Residuary Body:

Part of 23 Megstone Court, Killingworth; seven sites in Gateshead area.

Enterprise Zones

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has had from traders outside enterprise zones about unfair retail competition from within such zones; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *559*]: No record is kept of the number of representations received about enterprise zones, but I am well aware of the concern expressed by some businesses outside the zones.

Trees

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the health of yew trees in Britain; and what information he has as to how many years' needles a healthy tree of this species should usually be holding.

Mr. John MacKay: I have been asked to reply.

Like all trees, yew is subject to a range of diseases and disorders. The most noteworthy event in recent years was the browning of foliage which occurred in parts of the country in the spring of 1986, following the very cold February of that year.

No systematic study of needle retention has been made. Loss of needles which are two or more years of age occurs on some trees from time to time, but this has not been linked to any reduction in shoot growth.

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his Department's plans for surveying the health of Britain's trees in 1987.

Mr. John MacKay: I have been asked to reply.

The Forestry Commission's plans for surveys of tree health in 1987, some of which will be carried out in co-operation with other bodies, are described in Forestry Commission Research Information Note 117/87/SSS published on 5 May. I have arranged for copies of the note to be placed in the Library of the House.

TRANSPORT

Research Expenditure

Mr. Knox asked the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the answer of 1 April, *Official Report*, column *509*, if he will specify the items included in current road safety research expenditure referred to in that answer; and if he will make a statement on levels of research expenditure for future years, following his recent review.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The road safety research budget for 1987-88 has been increased by £100,000, bringing the allocated budget on road safety research to £5,914,000. The extra funds will be used to expand our existing programmes, particularly in motorcycle safety. This is the first step towards the major expansion of the road safety research budget recommended by the interdepartmental review of road safety—which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport sent to the chairman of the Transport Committee last week. A copy is in the Library.

I am still considering the appropriate level of expenditure for subsequent years. I am writing to my hon. Friend.

A1 Improvements

Mr. Trotter asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make a statement on the improvements that are taking place, planned and proposed for the A1 road between Doncaster and Scotch Corner; and what is his estimate of the likely cost of these improvements.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have just announced that the A1 between Dishforth and Scotch Corner will be widened to three lanes. This scheme brings the total value of our investment in the A1 in Yorkshire to £126·2 million. A schedule of schemes from Bramham to Scotch Corner is as follows.

The need for improvements between Bramham and Scotch Corner is being examined as part of the east of Leeds study, on which I hope to make an announcement later this year.

In addition a programme of safety measures is currently in hand, which includes safety barriers, gap closures and improved signing.

A1 trunk road

Improvements currently under construction

	£ million
1. Baldersby junction improvement	2·8 to be completed Summer 1987
2. Wetherby bypass (includes three junctions between Wetherby and Walshford)	11·8 to be completed Summer 1988
Improvements in preparation	
1. Bramham to Wetherby	10·1 Planned start of works—1989
2. Wetherby to Dishforth	49·3 Planned start of works—1989 (four contracts, four year construction)
3. Dishforth interchange	6·2 Planned start of works—1988
4. Dishforth to Scotch Corner phase 1 Gatenby lane	1·5 Planned start of works—1990
5. Dishforth to Scotch Corner phase II junction improvements	14·5 Planned start of works—1991
6. Dishforth to Scotch Corner carriageway improvements	30·0 Planned start of works—1991 onwards
Total value	126·2

Motorways (Surface)

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department has yet determined whether concrete or tarmacadam is the more cost-effective surfacing for new motorways; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: It is impossible and unnecessary to make a national decision on which material is the most cost effective. Recent research on performance and whole-life costs has shown that, within the limits of the information available, both materials can give equally satisfactory performance. Their relative merits for any given construction scheme depend on local conditions, and a number of designs and materials are included in the Department's standards and specifications to meet these conditions. Tenders for suitable designs in both forms of construction are sought on a competitive basis and the one of lowest initial cost is accepted. It is planned to extend research to examine the feasibility of evaluating individual tenders to take account of all whole life costs, including those arising from traffic delays which may be sensitive to local conditions.

Motorway Noise (Double Glazing)

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Transport what are his current criteria for determining whether householders living near a new stretch of motorway are eligible for double glazing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The criteria applying to dwellings near a new motorway are those in the Noise Insulation Regulations 1975. Regulation 3 requires that traffic noise at a facade of a property shall rise by at least 1dB(A) to 68dB(A) or more and that noise from the new highway shall contribute at least 1dB(A) to the overall increase.

I am sending my hon. Friend a copy of a booklet which explains the position in more detail.

Heathrow Flight Paths

Sir Gerard Vaughan asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the present controls on flight paths from Heathrow airport, in view of a recent near miss involving Concorde; whether the density of air traffic at Heathrow is approaching a level which would be considered a hazard to safety; if he will ask the Civil Aviation Authority to inquire urgently into the situation at Heathrow; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: The Civil Aviation Authority fulfils its responsibilities for air traffic control through the National Air Traffic Services. In the London area, air traffic control is exercised by the NATS from the London air traffic control centre at West Drayton and from air traffic control units at the three London airports. The arrival and departure routes to and from those airports, including Heathrow, form part of a complex airspace system in which pilots fly in accordance with prescribed air traffic control procedures. Following the recent incident in which a Concorde was involved, the relevant ATC procedures have been reviewed and confirmed to be satisfactory.

With regard to the increase in air traffic at Heathrow, air traffic management measures are taken to ensure that in busy periods the capacity limits of the airport are not exceeded. These measures include a European-based system of flow control where, if necessary, aircraft are kept on the ground until an airspace slot becomes available. I am assured by the Civil Aviation Authority that the NATS would not allow the pressure of demand in any way to jeopardise the safe operation of aircraft at Heathrow or elsewhere in the United Kingdom airspace for which it is responsible.

Level Crossing Accidents (Aston by Stone)

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will discuss with the chairman of British Rail the request by the Stafford borough council for an inquiry into two potentially fatal incidents at the level crossing at Aston by Stone in the constituency of the hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: No incidents or accidents have been reported to the Railway Inspectorate since the automatic half-Barrier crossing was commissioned in 1983, and consequently there has been no request for an inquiry by this Department. If there is concern it would be appropriate for British Rail and Stafford borough council to discuss it.

ROSPA

Mr. David Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has made a new agreement with ROSPA for its road safety work in England.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I pay tribute to the work ROSPA has achieved in the past and to the challenge it has set for the future.

A new agreement has just been signed. It follows extensive discussion with ROSPA, and reflects ROSPA's new marketing-led, business-orientated approach to road safety. The views of the local authority associations have been taken into account. ROSPA has set itself ambitious but achievable targets for streamlining and improving cost-effectiveness. Grant for England will be for £530,000 in 1987-88 but will reduce as ROSPA achieves its long-term plans. Additional grant will continue to be available for specific activities which offer good value for money.

WALES

Community Care

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has any method of knowing the number of employees of *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* other public bodies funded in part or in whole from Exchequer funds, who are engaged wholly or in part in providing care services within the community for elderly or disabled people in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The required information is not available centrally. Details of staffs of health authorities and local authorities social services departments are published annually by the Welsh Office, but the numbers engaged solely on care for the disabled and elderly cannot be separately identified.

Physical and Sensory Disabilities

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the total annual expenditure by social services departments in Wales on people with physical and sensory disabilities in each of the last 10 years at 1986-87 prices.

Mr. Mark Robinson [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *547*]: The information held by the Department does not enable the total cost of all local authority services provided to people with physical and sensory disabilities to be identified.

The following table shows separately the annual current expenditure on residential services for this group of people together with total current expenditure on all other services used by physically and sensorially disabled people but from which an expenditure figure for services used exclusively by this group cannot be separately identified.

Current Expenditure[1]*—Wales*
(1986-87 prices)[2]

Year	*Homes for the younger physically handicapped, blind and deaf* *£000's*	*All Other relevant services*[3] *£000's*
1976-77	1,941	47,156
1977-78	1,958	46,928
1978-79	2,359	48,989
1979-80	2,229	51,373
1980-81	2,440	51,245
1981-82	2,572	51,196
1982-83	2,803	51,006
1983-84	2,916	54,712
1984-85	2,909	55,419
1985-86	2,301	55,752

[1] Current expenditure is provided net of sales, fees, charges and other income.

[2] Figures are gross current expenditure revalued to 1986-87 prices using the gross domestic product deflator.

[3] Comprises expenditure on residential accommodation for the elderly and all adult day care excluding that provided in adult training centres, together with current expenditure on meals, home helps, laundry services, aids, adaptations, telephones and holidays. Expenditure on training administration and field social work is excluded.

DEFENCE

WEU Meeting (Luxembourg)

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the part his Department played in the Western European Union meeting in Luxembourg on 27 and 28 April.

Mr. Stanley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, to my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) on 30 April, at column 197, and to the communiqué of the meeting, a copy of which is in the Library. This series of meetings affords an opportunity for collective discussion by the Foreign and Defence Ministers from the member nations, and on this occasion I represented my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence, who was on an official visit to Turkey. I contributed in particular to the exchange of views on East-West relations and arms control, particularly INF, referred to in my hon. Friend's reply.

Military Exercise (Brittany)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Defence on whose authority military students from Sandhurst were sent on an exercise to Brittany in late March and early April, with an objective in their training exercise to pursue and combat Breton autonomists; and if the object of this exercise was cleared with the French Government beforehand.

Mr. Freeman: Students from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst participate in an annual training exercise authorised by the Ministry of Defence at a training area in Brittany. All exercises involving British forces personnel overseas are cleared in outline in advance with the Government of the host country, but some details of this exercise were inappropriate, and will not be repeated.

Far East Pilgrimage

Mr. Charles Wardle asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make available to interested parties a permanent reminder of the far east pilgrimage which his Department and the Royal British Legion organised in November 1985.

Mr. Stanley: I am pleased to announce that a video has been made of the 1985 veterans and widows pilgrimage to the far east entitled "For Their Tomorrow". Copies of the video will be given on request and at no cost to far east former prisoners of war, other far east veterans and to the widows of those who served in the far east. It is hoped that the video will provide a lasting memory of the pilgrimage both for those who took part and for those unable to make the journey. Requests for a copy of the video from far east veterans, former prisoners of war or widows should be addressed to:

Assistant Chief of Public Relations (Resources)
Defence Public Relations Staff
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Gloucester District Land Registry

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the delays in achieving registration at the Gloucester district land registry of titles in Cropthorne road, Shirley, originally applied for at the Harrow district land registry in December 1985 on behalf of London and Auckland Estates Limited and on the consequential delay affecting Mr. F. J. Morgan of 95 Cropthorne Road in the constituency of Solihull.

The Attorney-General: The land registry received no request to expedite this complex series of applications involving several hundred properties in different areas. Evidence concerning certain documents of title was not supplied by the applicant company's solicitors until February 1987. The registration in respect of 95 Cropthorne road has been completed.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Oxfam

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give additional financial support for Oxfam's overseas development work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: In 1986-87 the Government channelled almost £2 million through Oxfam for disaster relief and assistance to refugees; and we provided a grant of £1,724,250 for Oxfam under the joint funding scheme for long-term development work. The needs of disaster and refugee work vary from year to year and cannot be forecast. Support for Oxfam under the joint funding scheme has been increased to £1,925,000 in the current financial year. The resources available for the scheme as a whole have been more than doubled in the last four years, and we shall keep under review the possibility of providing further increases, for Oxfam as well as all the other agencies concerned, in the future.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Blair asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much aid and other financial assistance has been given to Sri Lanka for each year from 1980 to the present day; what are the conditions relating to human rights that are attached to the giving of such aid or financial assistance; and whether, in the light of the present situation in Sri Lanka, he is reconsidering the amount of such aid or financial assistance.

Mr. Chris Patten: British bilateral aid to Sri Lanka for 1980-86 was as follows:

	£000
1980	32,863
1981	26,272
1982	33,287
1983	29,461
1984	26,203
1985	17,316
1986	15,345

Sri Lanka also receives assistance from multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Community and several United Nations agencies, to which Britain contributes resources.

The level of our aid to Sri Lanka has declined from the exceptionally high level reached while we were helping finance the Victoria dam project. No conditions relating to human rights have been attached to our aid, which is intended to benefit all sections of the community in Sri Lanka. The observance of human rights is a factor which we and other Western donors take into account in giving aid to any country. All our aid programmes are regularly reviewed, but we have no plans at present to reconsider the amount of aid we give to Sri Lanka.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Postgraduate Students

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many and what percentage of postgraduate students studying in British universities are *(a)* United Kingdom home students and *(b)* from outside the United Kingdom; and what these figures have been in each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Walden: Information on full-time and sandwich postgraduate students studying in British universities is shown in the following table. The total numbers each year of part-time postgraduates, including those in the Open University, are also included.

Postgraduate students in Universities in Great Britain

Academic year beginning in	*Full-time and sandwich*				*Part-time*[1]
	Home students (000's)	*Students from abroad (000's)*	*Home students Per cent.*	*Students from abroad Per cent.*	*(000's)*
1976	32·2	18·1	64·0	36·0	23·0
1977	30·8	18·0	63·1	36·9	24·0
1978	30·9	18·3	62·8	37·2	25·0
1979	30·3	17·3	63·7	36·3	26·6
1980	31·1	16·4	65·5	34·5	28·2
1981	30·7	16·2	65·5	34·5	29·0
1982	29·5	15·9	64·9	35·1	29·1
1983	30·7	16·8	64·6	35·4	29·8
1984	31·2	17·7	63·8	36·2	30·6
1985	32·5	20·1	61·8	38·2	31·7

[1] Including Open University.

Foreign Languages

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the number of foreign language assistants in British schools in the current year; and how many there have been in each of the last 10 years.

Mrs. Rumbold: The number of foreign language assistants in schools and colleges in the United Kingdom in the current academic year is 2,490.

Numbers in each of the last 10 years are as follows:

	Number
1985-86	2,409
1984-85	2,495
1983-84	2,496
1982-83	2,498
1981-82	2,589
1980-81	2,750

	Number
1979-80	2,992
1978-79	3,158
1977-78	3,655
1976-77	3,530

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newpaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Fees and Charges

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish his Department's review of local education authority fees and charges.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Charges for educational "extras" were included in the recent review of all local authority fees and charges. The Government have not yet completed consideration of the results of that review.

Non-Special Schools

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much local education authorities have spent buying places at non-special fee-charging schools in each of the last five years.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The figures, in cash, were as follows:

	£ million (England only)
1981-82	30
1982-83	25
1983-84	20
1984-85	17
1985-86	14

1985-86 is the latest year for which outturn information is available.

Latin and Greek

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many state schools in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales teach as a compulsory subject Latin or Greek.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information is not available in the form requested. However, the following data from the 1984 secondary school staffing survey show, for each year group, the number of schools in a sample of about 10 per cent. of schools in England which taught classics as either a compulsory or an optional subject. Provision in schools in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Year group	*Number of schools with classics*	*Number of schools in sample*	*Per cent. of schools in sample with classics*
1	56	3,683	1·5
2	598	3,982	15
3	917	3,642	25
4	948	3,621	26
5	949	3,625	26
6th Form	671	2,295	29

University of Wales

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a table giving the numbers of United Kingdom students who were awarded degrees and diplomas from the University of Wales in the following subjects in the years 1997 and 1986, or the most recent year for which figures are available: *(a)* social, administrative and business studies, *(b)* engineering and technology and *(c)* science.

Mr. Walden [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *544*]: The information is as follows:

University of Wales Students of United Kingdom domicile

	Degrees and diplomas awarded		
	(a) Social administrative and business studies	*(b) Engineering and techonolgy*	*(c) Science*
1979			
First degrees	1,173	359	829
Higher degrees	67	53	161
Higher diplomas	155	1	6
1984			
First degrees	1,155	393	976
Higher degrees	84	46	155
Higher diplomas	97	5	13

Figures for 1985 are on a different subject classification and are therefore not comparable. In 1985 there were 917, 419 and 1,014 first degrees, 65, 56, and 147 higher degrees, and 73, three and 10 higher diplomas awarded to United Kingdom students in the new subject categories social administrative and business studies, engineering and technology and science, respectively.

EMPLOYMENT

Trade Unions

3. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Paymaster General what recent representations he has received concerning his Green Paper, "Trade Unions and Their Members."

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have received 105 representations on the Green Paper, "Trade Unions and Their Members" in the period up to today, including comments from employers, Trade Unions, various other representative organisations, and individuals.

17. **Mr. Evans** asked the Paymaster General when he next proposes to meet trade union leaders to discuss his recently published Green Paper, "Trade Unions and Their Members."

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The TUC have told me that they plan to seek a meeting in due course but have not yet done so. The Scottish TUC has also asked for a meeting. I will of course be happy to meet both groups when they are able to suggest convenient dates.

Tourism

5. **Mr. Charles Wardle** asked the Paymaster General what information he has on the amount of income that has been generated by tourism in the South-East Tourist Board area in each year since 1978.

Mr. Trippier: Tourist spending in the South-East tourist board area increased from £370 million in 1978 to £755 million in 1985. In the East Midlands tourist board area, spending increased from £145 million in 1978 to over £375 million in 1985.

A table giving full information has been placed in the library.

21. **Mr. Couchman** asked the Paymaster General whether he will estimate the value of capital investment in major tourism and leisure projects in 1986.

Mr. Trippier: A recent English tourist board survey suggests that in the last six months of 1986 at least £960 million worth of tourism and leisure developments were opened or under construction in England.

24. **Mr. Holt** asked the Paymaster General what information he has on the amount of income that has been generated by tourism in the Northumbria Tourist Board area in each year since 1978.

52. **Mr. John Browne** asked the Paymaster General what information he has on the amount of income that has been generated by tourism in the Southern Tourist Board area in each year since 1978.

Mr. Trippier: A table giving this information has been placed in the Library.

35. **Mr. Nicholas Winterton** asked the Paymaster General what effect he estimates the Licensing (Restaurant Meals) Act 1987 will have on tourism expenditure in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Trippier: No such estimates are available. However we share the restaurant trade's optimism that this measure will lead to a marked boost in their business, much of it due to increased tourist spending.

Training Schemes

16. **Mrs. Shields** asked the Paymaster General what research his Department is undertaking to assess the differences in the success rates of training schemes in helping young people into jobs.

Mr. Trippier: The Manpower Services Commission conducts a regular follow-up survey of all YTS leavers. The results which show the destination of leavers some three months after leaving, are placed in the Library.

Hotel and Catering Industry

18. **Mr. Bevan** asked the Paymaster General how many new jobs he estimates will be created at all levels in the hotel and catering industry by the end of the decade.

Mr. Trippier: The Government do not produce forecasts of future employment levels, which depend on many factors. However, during the period between December 1985 and December 1986 employment in hotels and catering increased by 17,000.

If present trends continue, there should be scope for many more jobs in the industry in the period up to 1990.

27. **Mr. Gale** asked the Paymaster General what Government initiatives are planned to help to fill the 40,000 vacancies estimated by the Hotel and Catering Training Board to have been left unfilled in the hotel and catering industry every year.

Mr. Trippier: The Government, through the Manpower Services Commission, will be helping employers in the hotel and catering industry to recruit and train the labour they need as it does with all sectors of the economy. In addition to the recruitment service provided by the MSC's jobcentre network, the MSC's vocational and educational training group provides financial and other support. In particular, the development of training and initiatives is considered a high priority, principally by funding places on both YTS and job training schemes for hotel and catering occupations. The MSC also supports initiatives by the hotel and catering training board to structure the training and career arrangements so providing it with a better qualified work force.

28. **Mrs. Ann Winterton** asked the Paymaster General if he will estimate what the intake on the hotel and catering job training scheme is likely to be.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I expect the new job training scheme to make a major contribution to meeting local skill needs in the hotel and catering industry. The hotel and catering training board is already operating as a managing agent in one of the pilot areas, and I expect many employers in the industry to become involved in the scheme as providers of practical work experience.

Labour Statistics

19. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Paymaster General what is the lastest available figure for those out of work for a year or more.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: On 8 January 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, the number of climants who had been unemployed for over one year was 1,334,000, which represents 40·5 per cent. of the total.

20. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Paymaster General when he expects unemployment to fall below 3 million; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The Government do not make forecasts of unemployment, but, if present trends continue, adult unemployment is likely to fall below 3 million within the next few months.

25. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Paymaster General what is the latest available figure for unemployment in Greater London.

Mr. Lee: On 12 March 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the Greater London area was 383,086.

31. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Paymaster General if he will state the latest figure for full-time equivalent jobs created since 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The Department's employed labour force series is not sufficiently detailed to support the accurate calculation of full time equivalent job estimates. The series would not reflect the importance of increasing labour market flexibility which has contributed to the continuing growth of part time jobs and has benefited both employers and employees. However, estimates from the labour force survey show an increase of 4½ per cent. between spring 1983 and spring 1986 in the person hours usually worked per week in the economy of Great Britain.

32. **Mr. Janner** asked the Paymaster General how many people presently on the Government's job training schemes have remained on the unemployment register.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: People on the new job training scheme are in full-time training and are not required to be available for work. They are therefore excluded from the unemployment count as would anybody else be in the same circumstances.

33. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Paymaster General if he will commission a fundamental study into long-term trends in net real unemployment in the United Kingdom, relating it to the comparisons available in other large EEC member state economies.

Mr. Lee: No study is necessary. The available information on unemployment already includes estimates from the annual Labour Force Survey which is conducted on a similar basis in all EC countries. Standardised unemployment rates for major industrial countries are published monthly by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

44. **Mr. Beith** asked the Paymaster General what are the most recent percentage figures for *(a)* total unemployment and *(b)* male unemployment in the Alnwick and Amble area.

Mr. Lee: On 12 March 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the Alnwick and Amble travel-to-work area expressed as a percentage of employees in employment plus the unemployed was 19·8 per cent. The corresponding rate for male claimants was 22·7 per cent.

47. **Mr. Duffy** asked the Paymaster General if he will indicate in percentage terms the number of unemployed in *(a)* the Sheffield travel-to-work area and *(b)* the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

Mr. Lee: On 12 May 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the Sheffield travel-to-work area, expressed as a percentage of employees in employment plus the unemployed, was 15·8 per cent. The comparable rate for the Yorkshire and Humberside region was 14·7 per cent. The number of unemployed claimants in the Yorkshire and Humberside region expressed as a percentage of the total working population was 13·2 per cent.

53. **Mr. Speller** asked the Paymaster General how many people in England were in paid employment at the end of April 1979 and at the end of the latest month in 1987 for which figures are available.

Mr. Lee: There are no figures available for the dates specified. The available information is as follows:

	Employees in employment in England
June 1979	19,503,000
December 1986	18,525,000

The figures are not adjusted for the effects of seasonal variation.

54. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Paymaster General what is the latest figure for the number of unemployed.

Mr. Lee: On 12 March 1987, the number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom was 3,143,370.

Ms. Clare Short asked the Paymaster General if he will publish figures from the 1985 labour force survey, showing separately for part-time and full-time workers the numbers and percentages of employees aged 16 years and over by ethnic origin, occupational group and sex.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The 1985 "Labour Force Survey" estimates are as shown in the table:

Employees by whether full[1] *or part-time*[2]*, Ethnic origin and occupation*

Great Britain, Spring 1985

Ethnic origin/broad occupational group	*Full-time*				*Part-time*			
	Men		*Women*		*Men*		*Women*	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
White								
Managerial and professional	3,335	32·1	1,176	26·2	248	39·3	772	18·6
Clerical and related	643	6·2	1,843	41·0	29	4·5	900	21·7
Other non-manual	645	6·2	298	6·6	75	11·8	598	14·4
Craft and similar	2,676	25·8	271	6·0	39	6·2	60	1·4
General labourers	211	2·0	19	0·4	12	1·9	*—	*—
Other manual	2,833	27·3	883	19·6	227	35·9	1,815	43·7
All occupations[3]	10,382	100·0	4,493	100·0	631	100·0	4,153	100·0
Non-White								
Managerial and professional	90	24·3	52	26·3	10	41·1	18	21·4
Clerical and related	34	9·1	56	27·9	*—	*—	12	15·0
Other non-manual	14	3·8	13	6·6	*—	*—	*—	*—
Craft and similar	84	22·7	22	11·1	*—	*—	*—	*—
General labourers	10	2·7	*—	*—	*—	*—	—	—
Other manual	138	37·2	56	27·8	*—	*—	38	46·4
All occupations[3]	371	100·0	199	100·0	25	100·0	83	100·0
Of which:								
(i) West Indian/Guyanese								
Managerial and professional	*—	*—	35	30·6	—	—	*—	*—
Clerical and related	*—	*—	23	28·5	*—	*—	*—	*—

Ethnic origin/broad occupational group	*Full-time*				*Part-time*			
	Men		*Women*		*Men*		*Women*	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
Other non-manual	*—	*—	*—	*—	—	—	*—	*—
Craft and similar	32	32·2	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—
General labourers	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	—	—
Other manual	42	42·6	26	32·1	*—	*—	18	58·7
All occupations[3]	98	100·0	82	100·0	*—	*—	31	100·0
(ii) Indian								
Managerial and professional	36	32·8	11	18·3	*—	*—	*—	*—
Clerical and related	11	9·8	15	24·6	*—	*—	*—	*—
Other non-manual	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—
Craft and similar	24	21·6	14	22·7	*—	*—	*—	*—
General labourers	*—	*—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other manual	31	28·5	16	25·9	*—	*—	*—	*—
All occupations[3]	109	100·0	61	100·0	*—	*—	22	100·0
(iii) Pakistani/Bangladeshi								
Managerial and professional	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—
Clerical and related	*—	*—	*—	*—	—	—	—	—
Other non-manual	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—
Craft and similar	15	23·0	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—
General labourers	*—	*—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other manual	35	55·6	—	—	—	—	*—	*—
All occupations[3]	63	100·0	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—
(iv) Other[4]								
Managerial and professional	37	37·1	15	28·9	*—	*—	*—	*—
Clerical and related	12	11·7	16	30·9	*—	*—	*—	*—
Other non-manual	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—
Craft and similar	14	14·1	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—	*—
General labourers	*—	*—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other manual	30	29·9	13	25·8	*—	*—	11	40·8
All occupations[3]	100	100·0	52	100·0	12	100·0	27	100·0
(v) All Ethnic Origins[5]								
Managerial and professional	3,461	31·9	1,250	26·3	260	39·3	799	18·7
Clerical and related	682	6·3	1,923	40·4	30	4·6	925	21·6
Other non-manual	662	6·1	313	6·6	81	12·3	613	14·3
Craft and similar	2,786	25·7	298	6·3	42	6·3	66	1·6
General labourers	222	2·0	20	0·4	13	2·0	*—	*—
Other manual	2,998	27·6	949	20·0	234	35·3	1,871	43·7
All occupations[3]	10,853	100·0	4,757	100·0	663	100·0	4,280	100·0

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[1] Basic usual hours (i.e. excluding meal breaks and paid and unpaid overtime) of 31 or more per week.

[2] Basic usual hours of 30 or less per week.

[3] Includes those who did not state their occupation.

[4] Includes African and mixed origin.

[5] Includes those who did not state their ethnic origin.

* Sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate.

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General what was the number of notified vacancies unfilled in the Coventry and Warwickshire area in each of the standard industrial classifications at the latest date, for which figures are available; how many were part-time; and what was the total number of unemployed at each job centre on the same date.

Mr. Lee: The following table contains the available information, which is also in the Library. The table gives the numbers of unfilled vacancies in the jobcentres that correspond to the local authority district of Coventry and the county of Warwickshire as at 6 February 1987, the latest date for which an industrial analysis of vacancies is available. Figures of part-time vacancies by standard industrial classification are not available. The unemployed are no longer required to register at jobcentres, and statistics of registrants at jobcentres do not distinguish the unemployed from those seeking a change of employment. Local unemployment figures from the current ward-based system are available in the Library.

Unfilled vacancies by 1980 SIC at Jobcentres in Coventry and Warwickshire as at 6 February 1987

	Coventry	*Bedworth*	*Leamington*	*Nuneaton*	*Rugby*	*Stratford-on-Avon*
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1	0	2	0	2	1
Energy/water supply industries	7	0	3	2	0	2

	Coventry	*Bedworth*	*Leamington*	*Nuneaton*	*Rugby*	*Stratford-on-Avon*
Extraction/manufacture: minerals/metals	15	3	1	7	1	1
Metal goods/vehicle industries, etc.	125	26	38	43	25	26
Other manufacturing industries	68	6	32	101	15	8
Construction	27	5	19	38	18	26
Distribution, hotels/catering; repairs	279	24	144	497	100	177
Transport/communication	66	4	27	11	6	13
Banking, finance, insurance, leasing, etc.	71	9	50	45	58	37
Other services	176	15	103	106	91	59
Total	836	92	419	848	319	350
of which: part-time	221	17	146	306	158	87

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General what are the unemployment figures for Coventry categorised by sex, age and the duration of unemployment, for the latest date for which statistics are available.

Mr. Lee: Following is the requested information which is available in the Library. Figures relate to 8 January 1987, the latest date for which an analysis of unemployment by age and duration is available.

Age and duration analysis of the unemployed for statistical date 8 January 1987
Coventry local authority area

Duration of unemployment in weeks	*Under 17*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20–24*	*25–29*	*30–34*	*35–39*	*40–44*	*45–49*	*50–54*	*55–59*	*60 and over*	*Total*
							Males							
One or less	6	11	19	13	82	34	25	22	17	12	23	25	27	336
Over 1 and up to 2	4	2	6	9	28	23	12	19	10	13	12	10	6	154
Over 2 and up to 4	13	16	29	23	120	56	44	33	25	23	23	27	26	458
Over 4 and up to 6	13	22	22	25	119	61	37	30	37	31	25	34	19	475
Over 6 and up to 8	9	31	34	22	95	53	33	32	28	19	31	26	19	422
Over 8 and up to 13	27	39	43	57	263	145	84	73	58	45	58	53	45	990
Over 13 and up to 26	101	128	178	168	516	281	174	169	119	99	112	162	182	2,389
Over 26 and up to 39	7	79	82	83	334	213	119	108	71	75	57	121	110	1,459
Over 39 and up to 52	2	65	54	49	216	140	107	65	66	56	51	81	86	1,038
Over 52 and up to 65	0	19	54	51	157	125	88	79	57	54	33	32	41	790
Over 65 and up to 78	0	57	68	57	177	121	69	66	65	45	26	57	13	821
Over 78 and up to 104	0	7	52	73	256	154	123	118	78	73	52	81	9	1,076
Over 104 and up to 156	0	0	55	109	386	268	201	156	134	113	109	153	15	1,699
Over 156 and up to 208	0	0	0	22	336	198	141	151	141	96	167	177	10	1,439
Over 208 and up to 260	0	0	0	0	238	159	142	129	130	105	241	172	13	1,329
Over 260	0	0	0	0	191	346	342	321	330	290	290	374	31	2,515
Total males	182	476	686	761	3,514	2,397	1,741	1,571	1,366	1,149	1,310	1,585	652	17,390
							Females							
One or less	8	16	19	25	82	33	13	5	7	11	8	8	0	235
Over 1 and up to 2	2	3	5	6	26	6	7	7	8	11	4	1	0	86
Over 2 and up to 4	9	15	19	21	65	47	21	17	10	12	14	7	0	257
Over 4 and up to 6	10	13	18	13	62	40	27	13	7	11	9	6	0	229
Over 6 and up to 8	2	20	14	6	56	43	18	10	12	15	8	10	0	214
Over 8 and up to 13	18	32	48	30	165	100	47	35	35	33	20	23	0	586
Over 13 and up to 26	94	111	183	124	297	201	120	69	57	57	31	40	0	1,404
Over 26 and up to 39	7	43	77	49	266	145	95	65	51	52	37	43	0	930
Over 39 and up to 52	3	34	38	35	143	113	60	44	39	43	34	45	0	631
Over 52 and up to 65	0	17	35	25	97	55	32	25	21	24	18	27	0	376
Over 65 and up to 78	0	51	76	39	84	45	18	24	19	27	22	20	0	445
Over 78 and up to 104	0	6	53	44	91	49	28	19	38	35	41	37	0	439
Over 104 and up to 156	0		38	64	162	51	36	30	62	53	89	52	2	639
Over 156 and up to 208	0	0	0	19	133	34	20	21	24	31	81	57	1	421
Over 208 and up to 260	0	0	0	0	96	19	15	15	21	25	70	60	0	321

Duration of unemployment in weeks	*Under 17*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*	*35-39*	*40-44*	*45-49*	*50-54*	*55-59*	*60 and over*	*Total*
Over 260	0	0		0	65	69	44	18	27	48	59	82	1	413
Total females	153	359	623	520	1,890	1,050	601	417	438	488	565	518	4	7,626

Foreign Visitors

22. **Mr. Allan Stewart** asked the Paymaster General what estimate he has made as to how many foreign business travellers to the United Kingdom there were in 1986 compared to the number of foreign holiday-makers.

Mr. Trippier: There were about 3·2 million business visits made by overseas residents to the United Kingdom in 1986, compared with about 5·9 million visits by foreign holidaymakers. In addition there were 2·9 million visits to the United Kingdom for the purpose of visiting friends and relatives, and 1·8 million for other purposes including study.

English Tourist Board

23. **Mr. Gregory** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to reorganise the 12 regions of the English Tourist Board to coincide with the eight Manpower Services Commission English regions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: No. Neither my Department nor the English tourist board have any plans to propose changes to the existing boundaries of the 12 regional tourist boards.

Manufacturing

26. **Mr. Pike** asked the Paymaster General which regions in England show the biggest percentage reductions in jobs in the manufacturing sector since 1979.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Between December 1979 and December 1986 the north, Yorkshire and Humberside and north-east regions have experienced the biggest percentage net reductions in the number of employees in employment in the manufacturing industries.

Some of the decrease in the number of employees in employment in manufacturing will be the result of re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services and road haulage, previously done by manufacturer's own employees and now done by subcontractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the move from manufacturing to service sector employment.

Job Training Scheme

29. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Paymaster General how many people are presently receiving training under the new job training scheme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: On 24 April 1987, 2,337 people were taking part in the new job training scheme.

34. **Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Paymaster General what indications he has so far received concerning the progress of the job training scheme.

36. **Mr. George** asked the Paymaster General what indications he has so far received concerning the progress of the job training scheme.

38. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Paymaster General what indications he has so far received concerning the progress of the job training scheme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Where the new job training scheme has already been established it is proving an attractive option for long-term unemployed people. A wide range of managing agents are coming forward to participate in the national extended scheme and plans are now well advanced for the provision of training opportunities in all areas of the country.

48. **Mr. Freud** asked the Paymaster General what measures he is taking to guarantee the quality of training on the job training scheme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Government and the MSC are committed to providing high quality training which leads to recognised vocational qualifications under the job training scheme, and to this end the Manpower Services Commission has agreed a comprehensive short and longer term quality assurance strategy which includes:

—introduction of the new status of approved training organisation (adult) for managing agents who wish to deliver new JTS programmes. Agents will need to meet exacting criteria in order to qualify.

—involvement of the training standards advisory service to provide professional and independent assessment of new JTS.

—monitoring by local MSC officials, with reporting back to area manpower boards.

Community Programme

30. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Paymaster General what recent representations he has received about the community programme.

Mr. Lee: We have received a number of representations from hon. Members and others about the community programme. The programme is one of our most successful schemes for helping long-term unemployed people and will, this year, provide places for over 300,000 people.

Business Travel

37. **Mr. Cash** asked the Paymaster General what Government initiatives have been taken to increase business travel to the United Kingdom from key European markets.

Mr. Tippier: The number of business travellers to the United Kingdom rose by 7 per cent. in 1986 compared to 1985, and represented almost 25 per cent. of all visitors to the United Kingdom. The British Tourist Authority, which the Government support by grant-in-aid which is charged with promoting all aspects of inward tourism, has recently appointed two business travel managers to cover Scandinavia, and the Benelux countries and France. They will specifically promote business and incentive travel to the United Kingdom. They have also allocated additional resources to this sector in Germany and Austria and will continue to promote conference and exhibition facilities in the United Kingdom through their 10 other European offices.

Job Creation

39. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement concerning the progress of Government schemes to help the unemployed move in order to find jobs.

Mr. Lee: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) on 4 March at column 566.

40. **Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Paymaster General what funds he proposes to allocate to each of the Government's employment creation programmes in 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: In 1987-88 the Government expect to spend over £3,000 million on employment, enterprise and training measures subject to Parliamentary approval. Full details for each measure were published in Class VII of the main estimates on 17 March. A copy is in the Library.

Mr. Hawksley asked the Paymaster General how many people received help under the enterprise allowance scheme in the Telford area in the year ended 31 March 1987.

Mr. Trippier: The information is not available in the form requested. However, in Shropshire, which includes Telford, 812 people joined the enterprise allowance scheme in the year ended 31 March 1987. There were 770 people in receipt of the allowance on 31 March 1987.

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General what measures his Department is currently introducing to reduce the level of unemployment in Coventry.

Mr. Lee: We shall continue to pursue sound economic policies for steady growth and low inflation which have so far produced more than a million new jobs since 1983. As part of this overall policy my Department and the Manpower Services Commission operate over 30 employment, enterprise and training measures which are described in the Action for Jobs booklet. With the exception of the career development loans scheme, which is currently being piloted in selected localities, all these measures are available in Coventry. My right hon. and learned Friend recently announced expansion of the very successful Inner Cities Initiative which will also benefit the unemployed in Coventry where one of the new task forces will operate.

Tourism (Terrorism)

41. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Paymaster General whether he will take steps to promote in the United Kingdom a scheme similar to the United States Government's national travellers security policy council, with a view to achieving a more active role for private enterprise in helping to combat terrorism and security problems, in so far as they impinge on tourism.

Mr. Trippier: I have no plans to do so.

Manufacturing Job Losses

42. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on regional differences in manufacturing job losses.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: There has been a long-term trend away from manufacturing employment in most industrialised countries, which has been evident in all regions of the United Kingdom since 1966. The world recession of the early 1980s combined with overdue action by British industry to reduce damaging levels of overmanning which had built up in the 1960s and 1970s accelerated this process in the United Kingdom, especially in those areas which relied most heavily on manufacturing employment. Since mid-1983, however, the rate of decline in manufacturing employment has slowed markedly overall, varying between a fall of 9 per cent. in the South East and a rise of 6 per cent. in East Anglia (June 1983 to June 1986).

In all regions where there has been a net loss of jobs in manufacturing since mid-1983 these losses have at least been offset by a rise in the number of jobs elsewhere in the economy. Some of the decrease in the number of employees in employment in manufacturing will be the result of re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services and road haulage, previously done by manufacturer's own employees and now done by subcontractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the move from manufacturing to service sector employment.

Tourist Information Centres

43. **Mr. Butterfill** asked the Paymaster General what information he has as to how many tourist information centres there are operating in the United Kingdom; how many operate all year round and how many operate seasonally; and whether there are any plans to open any new centres.

Mr. Trippier: There are currently some 455 tourist information centres in the United Kingdom which operate all year round, and a further 336 centres which operate on a seasonal basis. I understand that a number of new centres are likely to open this year, including one at the South Mimms service station on the M25.

YTS (Keighley)

45. **Mr. Waller** asked the Paymaster General how many young people have participated in the YTS in the Keighley travel-to-work area since the scheme's inception.

Mr. Trippier: The information is not available in the precise form requested. It is not possible to identify the Keighley travel-to-work area separately. However in the Bradford local authority district, which includesBradford, Keighley and Ilkley, 13,444 young people have joined YTS since its inception in April 1983.

Tourism (Weather)

46. **Mr. Harris** asked the Paymaster General what information he has as to the strategies being developed by the tourism industry aimed at minimising the effects of the British weather on the level of tourism.

Mr. Trippier: Both the English Tourist Board and the British Tourist Authority are giving high priority in their marketing and development strategies to initiatives which encourage all year round tourism. The ETB is able to consider financial assistance under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969 to encourage projects which provide all weather tourist facilities and amenities, such as indoor resort complexes, all-year-round holiday villages and indoor leisure facilities for all types of tourist accommodation.

Service Sector Jobs

49. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Paymaster General what was the net loss or gain in service sector jobs in 1986.

Mr. Lee: Between December 1985 and December 1986 (the latest date for which figures are available) there was a net increase of 328,000 in the number of employees in employment and the self-employed in the service industries in Great Britain.

YTS (Hotel and Catering)

Mr. Watts asked the Paymaster General how many trainees who have successfully completed the hotel and catering YTS scheme have found jobs in the industry.

Mr. Trippier: The information is not available in the form requested.

Just under 3,500 young people trained in the hotel and catering industry and completed their entitlement to YTS during the last full year, 1985-86. Of these around 36 per cent. were in employment, some three months after leaving with the same employer with whom they trained. In addition, a further 20 per cent. were in employment with a different employer. Some of the latter group may also have been working in parts of the hotel and catering industry.

Restart

51. **Mr. Park** asked the Paymaster General how many people have been called for interview under restart to date; and what percentage have gone on to receive full-time employment as a result.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: By 9 April 1,572,242 people had been called for a Restart interview, of whom 1,285,097 have already attended. We have no means of knowing precisely what proportion have gone on to full time employment as a result. These interviews aim at the selection of the best course open to the individual person from the wide range of employment, training and job-search opportunities available to help that individual return to employment. Of people interviewed, 73 per cent. agreed to pursue the offer made to them at their restart interview.

Miss Juliet Kent (Wages)

Mr. Rooker asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the outcome of the case by the wages inspectorate for recovery of wages owed to Miss Juliet Kent of Birmingham.

Mr. Trippier: Judgement was given in favour of Miss Kent on 10 March 1987. I understand that the sum awarded by the court has not yet been paid.

Construction Industry

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General how many construction workers were employed in the construction industry in Coventry, the west midlands and nationally at the latest available date, in 1983 and in 1979, respectively.

Mr. Lee: Estimates for the West Midlands region and Great Britain for the dates in question are:

Employees in employment in the construction industry.

	West Midlands	*Great Britain*
December 1979	101,000	1,207,000
December 1983	89,000	1,026,000
December 1986	95,000	1,007,000

Employment estimates for areas smaller then the standard economic regions are produced only for dates when censuses of employment are taken. Censuses were taken in September 1981 and September 1984 but the local area estimates from the 1984 census are not yet available.

Job Sharing Scheme

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General what is the number of people per year that have taken advantage of the job sharing scheme in Coventry.

Mr. Lee: The new job share scheme was launched on 1 April 1987. Prior to this, the number of approved applications under the job splitting scheme in Coventry was:

	Number
1983	5
1984	2
1985	2
1986	2

Parcels Service

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Paymaster General if he will instruct his enterprise and deregulation unit to conduct an urgent inquiry into the treatment by Government agencies of the express parcels services offered by the Post Office and by private courier concerns in competition; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *413*]: The enterprise and deregulation unit is involved in the discussions referred to by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry, the Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher) in his reply to my hon. Friend's related question on 6 May at column *418*. I shall write to my hon. Friend on the outcome of these discussions.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Radiation

Mr. Wigley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what investigations his Department has undertaken into the effect of radiation, from sources other than the Chernobyl disaster, on farming in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Jopling: The Ministry has for many years monitored radioactivity in the terrestrial and aquatic environment relating to major nuclear installations in England and Wales. From January 1986, an enhanced programme of monitoring for radioactivity in agricultural produce in the vicinity of such sites was established. Reports will be published annually.

Mr. Wigley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for how long he anticipates the radioactive lamb movement ban is likely to continue in force.

Mr. Jopling: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd) on 27 April at column 67.

Mr. Wigley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in how many areas in Cumbria there have been readings of radioactivity on lambs, which have shown an increase recently compared to corresponding readings taken in the autumn and this winter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jopling: Recent live monitoring of sheep leaving the restricted areas of Cumbria has shown a decrease in radioactivity levels as against autumn and winter readings. We will be keeping a close watch on levels in new season's lambs. However, it is still too early for the effects of consumption of fresh vegetation to be seen.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Jopling: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Suckler Cow Premium

Mr. Bruce asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will increase the suckler cow premium to £33·40 per head at the earliest available opportunity.

Mr. Jopling: The agreement reached by the Agriculture Council in December on the reform of the beef regime included provision for an increase in the suckler cow premium, which targets support on the specialist beef sector. Now that the changes to the beef intervention system have come into effect and to enable producers to plan for the opening date of the 1987-88 scheme on 15 June, I am pleased to announce that the rate for the coming scheme year will be increased from £24·74 to £33·40 per head. The detailed arrangements for the scheme will be announced shortly.

Farm Forestry and Cereals

Mr. Ashby asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make it his policy to ensure that tenant farmers are consulted and allowed to participate on an equal basis with owner occupiers in any schemes for farm forestry and cereal set asides; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Interests representing tenant farmers were consulted on our proposed farm woodland scheme and will be consulted in the coming months on our proposals for implementing the EC extensification scheme, which we hope will allow us to develop some of our ideas for cereals land diversion. The consultation document on the farm woodland scheme set out two possible ways in which tenants might participate in the scheme. These and other options will be considered further in the light of the responses to the consultation exercise.

Agricultural Commodities

Mr. Jackson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are his reasons for opposing the imposition of quotas on further agricultural commodities within the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Cereals

Mr. Jackson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are his reasons for favouring a cereals land diversion scheme which is voluntary rather than compulsory.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Intervention Butter

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why the Council of Ministers approved the extension of regulation 1341/86 to enable intervention butter to be transferred from Germany to Italy; and if the Council was informed regarding the purpose for which such butter was to be used.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

New Zealand

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the Government's policy on the import of agricultural produce from New Zealand.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *563*]: I assume my hon. Friend is referring to imports of butter from New Zealand on special terms.

These arrangements derive from Protocol 18 of the United Kingdom Act of Accession to the European Community and from the declaration by Community Heads of Government in March 1975, although the quantities and detailed conditions fall to be determined periodically by the Council of Ministers. The Government support their continuation, because of the importance to New Zealand's economy of access for butter to the United Kingdom market.

The quantity of butter which may be imported under these special arrangements has been progressively reduced from the initial quantity of 166,000 tonnes set in 1973 to 76,500 tonnes this year. It will be further reduced to 74,000 tonnes in 1988.

Small Producers

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to support small-scale agricultural producers.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *565*]: The Government's agricultural policy generally takes account of the range of agricultural activity in the United

Kingdom and of the variety of farm size and structure. However, measures introduced by the Government of particular benefit to smaller scale producers include:

the extension of the less favoured areas in 1984;
the introduction of, and the recent doubling of resources for environmentally sensitive areas;
new opportunities for diversification with grant available for ancillary businesses on or adjacent to farms;
arrangements to restore the milk quota received by producers with less than 200,000 litres of quota to their pre-quota level;
making direct compensation payments in 1984-85 and 1985-86 to alleviate the effect of the milk co-responsibility levy on small-scale producers;
obtaining over £3·3 million of EC aid to offset the effect of the cereals co-responsibility levy on small producers;
reform of capital transfer tax to abolish the tax on capital gifts made between individuals during their lifetime;
introduction of the agricultural improvement scheme which gives particular benefit to smaller farmers who draw up improvement plans, and provides for a 25 per cent. supplement on capital grants available under the scheme to many young new entrants to farming.

SCOTLAND

Hospital Pharmacists

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide a breakdown of the establishment of hospital pharmacists in each health board in Scotland.

Mr. John MacKay: Information on the establishment of hospital pharmacists is not collected centrally.

Colleges of Education (Financial Management Survey)

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library a copy of the report on financial management survey relative to colleges of education, indicating what time has been given for consultation and when a final decision will be taken; if he will state the numbers of submissions so far made; and if he will make an interim statement on his conclusions.

Mr. John MacKay: I have arranged for copies of this report to be placed in the Library. The survey is one of a series aimed at producing improvements in the management of executive non-departmental public bodies, as part of the Government's financial management initiative.

The report addresses management issues in the Scottish Education Department and in the colleges, and it has not therefore been issued as a consultative document, although college principals have been consulted on parts relevent to them. The Department shortly will issue an action plan to the colleges indicating the extent to which individual recommendations have been accepted and the suggested timetable for their implementation.

Ninewells Hospital (Mammography Unit)

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he intends that a mammography unit should be established at Ninewells hospital; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: Discussions are in progress with Health Boards about the locations of the first two or three centres for breast cancer screening and an announcement will be made once these discussions are complete.

Stirling University

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been paid in grants by the Scottish Development Agency to Stirling university in each of the past three financial years; and for what projects the grants were given.

Mr. Lang: The information is set out in the table:

	Grant (£000)		
Project	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Scottish Graduate Enterprise Scheme	32	—	—
Small Business Resource Centre	—	13	24·5
Scottish Graduate Enterprise Scheme	—	—	30·0

In addition a grant payment of £350,000 was paid to Stirling enterprise park (associated with Stirling university) under the local enterprise grants for urban projects scheme in March 1985.

AIDS

Mrs. McCurley asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he is yet in a position to announce proposals for a curricular project on AIDS.

Mr. John MacKay: We believe teaching designed to avoid the spread of AIDS should be included in the curriculum of every pupil in a way appropriate to the age-groups concerned. To be effective such teaching should be part of a carefully planned programme of health and sex education.

The most urgent needs are therefore for guidelines within which schools can plan a programme of health and sex education and then for curricular materials on AIDS and related issues which can be used by teachers, with appropriate in-service training, in the contexts such a programme will provide.

The Scottish Home and Health Department has now agreed to collaborate with Strathclyde regional council on a curricular project designed to meet these needs. The project is modelled on the successful partnership which produced the "Drugwise 12-14" package. It will begin as soon as possible and run to June 1988. A contribution of £50,000 will be made by the Department to the salary costs of the project team, whose remit will be as follows:

i. to devise, drawing from existing good practice and consulting as appropriate, a general health and social education framework covering all stages of education from pre 5 to 16+. The framework should illustrate the sequencing and timing of topics, the approach to be taken to ensure that each stage builds on pupils' previous experience and knowledge, and the need to promote positive attitudes. The framework should show how sensitive issues such as smoking, alcohol, drugs, sexual behaviour and diseases such as AIDS can be dealt with in context. It should take into account the recommendations of the joint Consultative Committee on the Curriculum/Scottish Health Education Group Working party which is considering the provision of health education, including sex education, for the 10-14 age group;

ii. *(a)* to review existing materials relevant to teaching about AIDS, and to draft new materials as necessary; to prepare a programme of piloting and evaluation of such materials and to formulate guidance on the in-service training requirements of teachers expected to work with them. The preparation of materials should take into account the views of interested parties, including the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum, the Scottish Home and Health Department, the Scottish Health Education Group, teaching staff, parents, churches, Health Boards and other education authorities. In preparing materials, the team should also take into account the possibility that parents may prefer to tackle certain of these issues directly with their children.

(b) to devise finally detailed guidance on in-service training and a package of curricular materials for use in the classroom on AIDS and associated issues. The package should be capable of dissemination at national level for use in school health and social education programmes.

The Department will appoint a broadly based consultative group to ensure that the direction of the project reflects a national consensus of opinion. As with Drugwise the materials which result from the project will be made available throughout Scotland.

Penal Establishments

Mr. Pollock asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has made for the future use of penal establishments in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I have now completed a detailed review of the use of penal establishments in Scotland in the light of completion of new accommodation at Phase II of Shotts prison and the measures needed to reduce overcrowding in local prisons notably Aberdeen, Barlinnie, Edinburgh and Inverness prisons.

Because of the Government's capital investment programme, 180 extra places became available last year when Greenock prison re-opened and 468 extra places will be available as Shotts prison phase II is occupied in the second half of this year. Since January 1985, there has been an increase of 40 per cent. in the average daily penal population serving long sentences. This increase, particularly in numbers of adult male prisoners, has put additional pressures on local prisons and on the existing training halls for long-term prisoners at Edinburgh, Perth, Greenock and Shotts prisons. Although additional capacity has been planned, changes in the use of some establishments were essential to match available places more closely to needs for different categories of inmate.

In the earlier part of this year, urgent temporary measures were taken to reduce the pressure on Barlinnie and other local prisons by making use of under-occupied accommodation for young offenders. One hall at Glenochil YOI was used for this purpose from March and a second hall was taken into use for adult prisoners on a temporary basis from 6 April. With effect from 13 April, Noranside institution, which had been used as an open young offenders' institution, became an adult open prison and now houses just under 100 adult inmates.

After consultation with the Trade Union Side of the Scottish Prison Service and comments from other interested parties, such as visiting committees for individual establishments, I have decided that the whole of Glenochil YOI should be used on a permanent basis as an adult prison and that Dumfries prison (apart from its local accommodation for remands) and Greenock prison should replace Glenochil as secure young offenders institutions. With the change of use, and the change of use for Noranside which has already taken place, about 300 places in the young offender system will have been transferred to use for adult prisoners. The final timetable, and detailed arrangements for the change of use of Glenochil YOI, Dumfries prison and Greenock prison are now being worked out and will be implemented as quickly as possible from June this year.

Friarton institution, which is being used for short-term adult prisoners at present, will be retained for adults for the time being. If additional places for convicted young offenders prove to be necessary, we will give further consideration to use of Friarton as a medium security young offenders institution.

I am satisfied that these measures will substantially reduce recent levels of overcrowding in adult local prisons, provide a more suitable range of facilities and opportunities for long-term adult prisoners and young offenders, and enable essential repairs in older prison halls to proceed sooner than would otherwise be possible. The need for different kinds of accommodation will continue to be carefully monitored in relation to the size and balance of the population of Scottish penal establishments.

Tourist Board

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the expenditure by the Scottish tourist board for each year since 1983 at home and overseas and also details of total expenditure by area tourist boards and other agencies on promoting tourism in Scotland.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *43*]: Total expenditure by the Scottish tourist board in supporting tourism development was as follows:

Financial year

(£ million)

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Domestic	8·1	9·8	8·4	8·7
Overseas[1]	—	0·2	0·3	0·4
Total	8·1	10·0	8·7	9·1

[1] No overseas expenditure in 1983-84.

Comparable expenditure by area tourist boards, local authorities and the Highlands and Islands Development Board over the same period was as follows:

Financial year

(£ million)

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Area Tourist Boards[1]	[2]—	4·7	5·1	[3]5·6
Local				
current	3·1	2·8	3·3	[3]3·6
capital	0·3	0·2	0·5	[3]0·3
Highlands and Islands Development Board	8·6	8·2	8·9	8·8

[1] Includes financial contributions made by the Scottish Tourist Board, the Highlands and Islands Development Board and local authorities.

[2] 1983-84 figures not available: ATB network in process of establishment.

[3] Provisional.

Figures on expenditure by the British Tourist Authority and the Scottish Development Agency are not available.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Southend Airport (Bus Link)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what response he has had to the representations made to the European Economic Community Commission regarding the refusal of the German authorities to give permission for a bus to operate from Ostend to Frankfurt and link with an air service from Southend airport; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We have asked the Commission to review, as a matter of urgency, under article 14 of Regulation EC 517/72, the Federal Republic of Germany's refusal to authorise a British bus company to run a scheduled service between London and Frankfurt. We await a response from the Commission.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Civil Servants (Wages and Conditions)

Mr. Flannery asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the impact in Northern Ireland of the campaign by civil servants for improved wages and conditions.

Mr. Scott: The campaign of industrial action by Northern Ireland civil servants had its most serious impact during week commencing 13 April when Northern Ireland was affected by the trade union's regional programme of strike action.

During that week 10 out of 34 social security offices plus two other central benefit offices were closed on Monday to Wednesday. This increased to 33 social security offices being closed on the Thursday and Friday. In addition, a number of Department of Economic Development job markets had to be closed. On the Monday to Wednesday the level of absence on strike action within the selected DHSS Offices was marginally in excess of 80 per cent. On the Thursday and Friday the overall level of absence across all departments was around 35 per cent.

The major effect of this industrial action in the community was that a significant number of people did not receive their social security benefits during the week in question.

Alcoholism (Health Funds)

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what amount of public funds from *(a)* Department of Health and Social Services and *(b)* the area health boards have been made available each year for the past 10 years to (i) the Northern Ireland Council on Alcohol Ltd., (ii) the Council on Alcohol Related Problems and (iii) the Northland Centre in Londonderry.

Mr. Needham: The information requested is as follows:

Year	*Northern Ireland Council on Alcohol* £	*Council on Alcohol Related Problems* £	*Northlands* £
(a) Funding from the Department of Health and Social Services			
1986-87	66,426	22,868	87,200
1985-86	57,950·30	22,202	22,500
1984-85	55,599	23,924	17,000
1983-84	139,461	18,887	—
1982-83	47,168·50	26,933	664·50
1981-82	43,346	15,224	—
1980-81	36,350	11,940	—
1979-80	23,530	4,000	—
1978-79	15,000	3,000	—
1977-78	—	—	—
(b) Funding from Health and Social Services Board			
1986-87	19,428	—	45,000
1985-86	6,197	—	37,000
1984-85	8,000	—	37,000
1983-84	4,500	508	36,000
1982-83	—	—	34,000
1981-82	—	—	34,000
1980-81	—	—	30,000
1979-80	—	—	30,000
1978-79	—	—	20,000
1977-78	—	—	15,000

Terrorism

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the total cost of resisting the terrorist campaign since 1969.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply, 5 May 1987, c. 392*]: One cannot give any completely reliable figure for the total costs incurred by a number of different Departments and agencies in resisting the terrorist campaign since 1969. However, the following table gives some indication of the scale of expenditure involved:

Year	*Additional Cost[1] of Deploying the Armed Forces in support of the RUC (£'000)*	*Expenditure[1] by the NIO on Law, Order, Protective and Miscellaneous Services[2][5] (£'000)*
1969-70	1,500	n/a
1970-71	6,500	n/a
1971-72	14,000	n/a
1972-73	29,000	n/a
1973-74	33,000	n/a
1974-75	45,000	99,529
1975-76	60,000	146,030
1976-77	65,000	165,383
1977-78	69,000	172,536
1978-79	81,000	199,317
1979-80	96,000	240,781
1980-81	111,000	299,696
1981-82	[3]149,000	334,446
1982-83	134,000	351,177
1983-84	141,000	365,959
1984-85	134,000	394,382
1985-86	127,000	436,333
1986-87	150,000	[4]480,300

Notes:

n/a = not available.

[1] All figures are in actual terms.

[2] The LOPMS budget includes expenditure on items (eg civil defence) not directly related to the terrorist campaign, and the bulk of LOPMS expenditure (eg on the RUC and on prisons) does not all arise from the terrorist campaign.

[3] The basis for calculating the armed forces additional costs was changed in 1981-82.

[4] This figure is still an estimate.

[5] Other Departments (eg the Lord Chancellor's Department and

the Attorney-General's office) incur expenditure in Northern Ireland which arises from the terrorist campaign and which is not included in this table.

Police Complaints

Mr. Archer asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons were arrested by the police in Northern Ireland in 1986 under emergency legislation, and under other arrest powers; how many in each category complained whilst in police custody of irregular conduct by police officers during interview procedures; how many of any such complaints in each category were not subsequently pursued by complainants with the Police Complaints Board; and what proportion of those persons were arrested under emergency legislation who alleged irregular conduct by police officers during interview procedures were at the time being interviewed at *(a)* Castlereagh and *(b)* Gough police offices, respectively.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 May 1987, c. *536*]: In 1986, 2,212 people were arrested by the Royal Ulster Constabulary under the emergency legislation; 317 subsequently made allegations about irregular conduct by police officers. Of these, 51·4 per cent. (163) had been interviewed at Castlereagh and 38·2 per cent. (121) at Gough barracks police offices. The remainder had been interviewed elsewhere.

During 1986 the Police Complaints Board dealt with 251 cases of complaints by persons arrested under emergency legislation; of these, 196 were subsequently not pursued by the complainants.

Information requested about persons arrested under other arrest powers is not available in the form requested.

However, in 1986 the Police Complaints Board received a total of 2,775 complaints; of these 1,111 were withdrawn by the complainants. In addition, during 1986 the board granted 521 requests from the RUC, under regulation 11 of the RUC (Complaints) Regulations 1977, to dispense with the requirements of section 13 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1970 and of article 5(1) and (4) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 as the complaints were anonymous, repetitious or incapable of investigation.

Housing

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are on the housing waiting list in the Armagh urban area and Keady urban area.

Mr. Needham [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 May 1987, c. *539*]: This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. I understand from the chairman that at 30 April 1987 there were 236 applications on the Housing Executive's waiting list for the Armagh urban area and 53 applications for the Keady area.

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to how many new houses are to be built in the Armagh urban area and the Keady area in 1987-88 year.

Mr. Needham [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 May 1987, c. *539*]: This is a matter for the Housing Executive in the first instance, but I understand from the chairman that in the 1987-88 financial year the Housing Executive expects to complete 12 houses in the Armagh urban area and plans to start a further 12. No house completions or starts are planned in the Keady area in the same period.

Beef

Mr. Mallon asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether Anglo-Irish Beef (International) Ltd., Newry, has applied for grants for 16 to 18-year-olds soon to be employed there; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 May 1987, c. *539*]: Anglo-Irish Beef Packers (Newry) Ltd. has discussed the training of young workers aged 17 to 18 with the Department of Economic Development (DED) but have not yet made an application for assistance.

All employers in Northern Ireland are entitled to apply for assistance towards the training of young employees under the youth training programme work scheme. Before eligible recruits can be taken on the DED must approve the plans made for their training and be satisfied that arrangements will be conducive to good training.

Strip Searching

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many strip searches were made of female prisoners in Her Majesty's prison, Maghaberry, in March and April 1987, respectively; if he will give the number of persons involved and the number of times each person was searched; whether any prison contraband, smuggled item or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while the search was being concluded; and if he will indicate the reasons for the search, namely, making an appearance in court on remand and in which court, attending trial, inter-prison visit or other reasons;

(2) how many strip searches were made of female prisoners in Her Majesty's prison, Maghaberry, in June 1986; if he will give the number of persons involved and the number of times each person was searched; whether any prison contraband, smuggled items or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while the search was being conducted; and if he will indicate the reasons for the search, namely, making an appearance in court, and in which court, on remand, attending trial, inter-prison visit or other reasons.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, column *568*]: The information requested is as follows:

	1986	*1987*	
	June	*March*	*April*
Total number of searches carried out	36	33	49
Total number of inmates searched	23	20	27
Number of prisoners searched once	13	9	9
Number of prisoners searched twice	8	9	15
Number of prisoners searched three times	1	2	2
Number of prisoners searched four times	1	—	1
First admission on remand/awaiting trial	7	2	8
First admission on sentence/final discharge	18	17	25
Attending Antrim remand court	—	—	1
Attending Armagh remand court	—	—	1
Attending Belfast remand court	—	6	2
Attending Larne remand court	—	1	—
Attending Newtownards remand court	—	2	—
Attending trial	1	—	—
Attending appeal	—	1	1
Bail court appearances	5	2	7
Going on or returning from home leave	—	2	2
Compassionate home leave	4	—	—
Inter-prison visits	1	—	2

No prohibited article was found during these searches and no prisoner refused to be searched.

Police Federation

Sir Eldon Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why he has not consulted the Northern Ireland Police Federation about measures to enhance security in Northern Ireland; and what steps he is now taking to respond to the 13 point proposals on this and related matters made recently to his Department and the Chief Constable by the secretary of the federation.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *568*]: I am in regular contact with the federation and am aware of its views on a wide range of issues, including security policy. As I explained in the House on 6 May, at column 810, there is a distinction between Ministers listening to the federation's views on general security policy matters and the federation seeking to involve Ministers in operational judgments and decisions. Concerns of an operational nature must properly be passed through the Royal Ulster Constabulary chain of command to the Chief Constable using the normal management and consultation structures that exist for that purpose.

I have not received the document to which my hon. Friend referred; but I understand that the Chief Constable will be replying in due course to a letter about law and order issues which the federation's secretary sent to him on 24 April.

Birds (EEC Directive)

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list for Northern Ireland those sites which have been identified as meeting the criteria for designation under the EEC birds directive as special protection areas and under the Ramsar convention; when these sites will be designated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *27*]: No sites have been identified as meeting the criteria for designation under the EC wild birds directive as special protection areas; survey and assessment of sites likely to meet the criteria is ongoing in association with an extensive survey of sites of scientific interest being undertaken by the Department.

Under the Ramsar convention, parts of Lough Foyle and Strangford Lough meet the required criteria; designation will be considered following their designation as areas of special scientific interest. Lough Neagh and Lough Beg are already listed as Ramsar sites.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 13 May 1987

HOME DEPARTMENT

MV Earl William (Detainees)

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what access will be made available to legal advisers to persons detained on the Earl William;

(2) what exercise facilities will be made available for persons detained on the Earl William;

(3) what is the estimated cost of *(a)* acquiring and *(b)* refitting the Earl William.

Mr. Waddington: All reasonable requests for access to persons detained on the Earl William by legal advisers, friends and relations will be met. There are good facilities on board for interviews to take place. There are adequate exercise facilities on board. The cost of hiring the vessel is the subject of a commercial contract, the details of which it would not be proper to reveal.

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how much the ferry Earl William is costing to hire; how long will it be moored at Harwich; what regulations it is subject to; how many and what categories of detainees will be detained there; what will be the total weekly cost of keeping detainees on the ferry; and if he will make a statement;

(2) from which detention centres those detainees to be detained on the ferry, the Earl William moored at Harwich, are to be transferred; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *549*]: The cost of hiring the MV Earl William is the subject of a commercial contract with its owners, the details of which it would not be proper to reveal. It has been hired initially for a period of three months, during which it will be moored at Harwich. It will be subject to standard safety and fire regulations and those concerning the way detainees are housed will be the same as other Immigration Service detention centres. The ship is expected to be used principally for passengers awaiting removal or further examination whose cases are not appropriate for temporary admission. The number will depend on the pressure on this and other immigration service detention centres and the continued availability of prison department resources. The total weekly cost of keeping detainees on board will also depend on the number detained.

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has received about the success of neighbourhood watch schemes in the Metropolitan police district.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There are some 7,000 neighbourhood watch schemes in the Metropolitan police district. As my right hon. Friend stated in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) on 8 May, at column 550, the results of the evaluative research of two of these schemes by the Cambridge Institute of Criminology indicated some success in reducing fear of crime and increasing social cohesion but not in reducing levels of crime. There are, however, schemes where a reduction in recorded crime has followed the introduction of neighbourhood watch. For example, on the Ferry Lane estate in Tottenham burglaries were reduced from 30 during the six months preceding the introduction of the scheme to 18 in the six months following its introduction. In the last six months of 1986 no burglaries were reported. In the London borough of Wandsworth an increase in the number of neighbourhood watch schemes from 375 in 1985 to 558 in 1986 coincided with a reduction in residential burglaries from 4,119 to 3,514.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89;

(3) if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(4) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Hurd: Since 1984 the Home Office has awarded contracts for the supply of computer hardware and software intended wholly or mainly for word processing or for desktop publishing to the following companies:

AES
British Olivetti
British Telecom
Digital
Ferranti
IBM
ICL
NCR
Sentinel Software (software only)
UNISYS
Wang

For reasons of commercial confidentiality it would not be right to provide details of the value of individual contracts. However, total expenditure since 1984 by financial years is as follows:

	1985-86 (out-turn) £	*1986-87 (estimated out-turn)* £
Hardware	177,657	659,953
Software	26,754	18,207

Planned expenditure for word processing hardware and software in 1987-88 is £703,000 and for 1988-89 is £1,243,000.

National and Local Elections

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to issue guidance to returning officers for national and local elections about (i) the provision of training for polling clerks and (ii) monitoring compliance by polling clerks with electoral regulations.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The training of polling clerks and any monitoring of their compliance with the law governing the conduct of parliamentary and local government elections is the responsibility of the returning officers concerned. If my hon. Friend has a particular incident in mind, I should be glad to have the details so we can consider whether any guidance should be issued to returning officers.

Crime (Clear-up Rates)

Mr. Kaufman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, pursuant to his answer of 7 May, *Official Report*, column *510*, he will give comparable clear-up rates for each police force area in England and Wales for 1978.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The clear-up rates for police force areas in 1978 are given in the following table:

Ratio of notifiable offences[1] *recorded to notifiable offences cleared up by the police, 1978*

Police force area	*Percentage cleared up*
Avon and Somerset	42
Bedfordshire	46
Cambridgeshire	55
Cheshire	59
Cleveland	55
Cumbria	54
Derbyshire	45
Devon and Cornwall	46
Dorset	47
Durham	51
Essex	43
Gloucestershire	51
Greater Manchester	46
Hampshire	46
Hertfordshire	51
Humberside	45
Kent	40
Lancashire	55
Leicestershire	57
Lincolnshire	57
London, City of	23
Merseyside	43
Metropolitan Police	21
Norfolk	49
Northamptonshire	50
Northumbria	51
North Yorkshire	52
Nottinghamshire	49
South Yorkshire	53
Staffordshire	55
Suffolk	55
Surrey	49
Sussex	56
Thames Valley	43
Warwickshire	46
West Mercia	48
West Midlands	34
West Yorkshire	49
Wiltshire	44
Dyfed-Powys	64
Gwent	59
North Wales	58
South Wales	46
England and Wales	42

[1] Excluding offences of "other criminal damage" value £20 or under.

Mr. Kaufman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish for 1978 and 1986, for each police force area in England and Wales, the clear-up rate for *(a)* violence against the person, *(b)* burglary, *(c)* theft, *(d)* fraud/forgery and *(e)* criminal damage.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The readily available information is given in the following tables.

Ratios of offences cleared up to offences recorded by the police
England and Wales

Percentages

Police Force area	*Theft and handling stolen goods*		*Fraud and forgery*		[1]*Criminal damage*	
	1978	*1986*	*1978*	*1986*	*1978*	*1986*
Avon and Somerset	38·7	26·6	92·5	75·0	38·8	28·7
Bedfordshire	45·2	28·3	90·6	56·3	26·6	21·2
Cambridgeshire	53·0	35·4	92·2	61·6	36·9	28·9
Cheshire	58·6	41·3	92·6	83·7	52·9	40·6
Cleveland	55·8	34·8	81·7	52·3	35·1	24·7
Cumbria	54·1	42·4	93·6	77·2	43·9	37·5
Derbyshire	43·2	48·7	90·3	87·7	26·4	34·4
Devon and Cornwall	42·7	37·2	88·3	80·1	32·9	29·9
Dorset	44·1	29·3	94·5	81·8	38·2	29·9
Durham	51·8	38·1	95·7	87·1	35·7	31·9
Essex	42·0	36·4	90·6	57·5	25·8	23·2
Gloucestershire	49·8	30·6	87·4	50·7	45·3	24·4
Greater Manchester	45·0	24·8	96·4	84·0	41·1	19·1
Hampshire	43·5	32·2	92·2	67·2	34·9	25·5
Hertfordshire	47·7	46·0	97·0	90·4	26·3	27·9
Humberside	46·1	31·1	83·6	54·7	31·8	19·3
Kent	37·1	31·5	89·7	55·3	34·2	26·0
Lancashire	54·2	41·8	95·4	88·9	48·8	39·6
Leicestershire	55·2	41·4	96·0	77·0	39·2	31·6
Lincolnshire	57·3	38·5	77·5	58·9	46·3	22·6

Police Force area	Theft and handling stolen goods 1978	Theft and handling stolen goods 1986	Fraud and forgery 1978	Fraud and forgery 1986	[1]Criminal damage 1978	[1]Criminal damage 1986
London, City of	16·3	8·8	58·1	41·9	32·8	18·5
Merseyside	44·3	39·0	87·9	72·8	27·3	17·0
Metropolitan Police	20·1	14·9	63·8	52·8	14·6	9·2
Norfolk	47·0	37·4	90·5	74·0	40·7	24·1
Northamptonshire	49·0	29·3	88·7	64·1	34·9	18·0
Northumbria	52·6	44·1	91·0	58·0	33·0	19·1
North Yorkshire	51·2	32·4	94·6	53·6	54·5	26·7
Nottinghamshire	46·8	31·3	77·1	55·9	34·5	19·4
South Yorkshire	53·9	44·3	92·0	71·7	30·6	27·0
Staffordshire	53·7	43·2	88·8	71·8	42·0	31·6
Suffolk	54·1	44·7	89·4	65·5	40·3	30·1
Surrey	46·2	31·9	93·8	66·6	40·8	29·7
Sussex	53·6	31·0	94·5	59·9	49·9	25·1
Thames Valley	40·0	36·5	85·5	65·2	32·2	23·7
Warwickshire	42·7	33·3	93·9	67·1	31·6	24·2
West Mercia	45·8	39·4	89·8	68·2	36·8	31·6
West Midlands	33·3	27·3	85·0	51·9	23·0	16·1
West Yorkshire	46·2	36·1	86·8	65·5	31·8	23·5
Wiltshire	43·0	35·8	86·2	60·1	21·7	26·9
Dyfed-Powys	58·7	43·9	94·6	90·2	58·2	41·4
Gwent	57·6	46·8	95·6	92·4	51·0	42·8
North Wales	55·2	33·3	94·2	67·7	45·8	25·4
South Wales	46·7	38·7	92·0	77·2	34·2	26·2
England and Wales	40·3	30·8	84·0	66·6	30·0	20·7

[1] Excluding offences of "other criminal damage" value £20 or under.

Ratios of offences cleared up to offences recorded by the police in England and Wales

Police Force Area	Violence against the person 1978 Per cent.	Violence against the person 1986 Per cent.	Burglary 1978 Per cent.	Burglary 1986 Per cent.
Avon and Somerset	84·6	78·8	30·9	15·5
Bedfordshire	74·4	75·7	30·1	16·7
Cambridgshire	84·8	81·6	40·7	30·2
Cheshire	92·3	85·4	48·0	32·8
Cleveland	81·9	74·1	43·5	27·6
Cumbria	87·8	89·6	37·9	31·1
Derbyshire	84·1	86·9	30·4	32·6
Devon and Cornwall	87·8	83·7	34·9	31·7
Dorset	72·0	77·4	26·8	25·5
Durham	83·7	84·0	37·1	27·9
Essex	79·8	78·8	33·4	32·4
Gloucestershire	82·3	71·5	42·1	19·9
Greater Manchester	79·6	69·7	31·4	22·0
Hampshire	76·1	76·2	32·5	23·2
Hertfordshire	80·2	81·1	38·8	27·7
Humberside	82·2	70·2	31·7	20·4
Kent	78·3	79·2	31·3	29·3
Lancashire	90·9	83·7	41·7	39·3
Leicestershire	84·0	80·4	49·5	41·5
Lincolnshire	92·3	76·6	44·3	26·4
London, City of	60·1	61·2	21·9	12·1
Merseyside	70·1	51·5	35·7	36·9
Metropolitan Police	55·6	48·8	10·5	9·6
Norfolk	87·6	87·1	37·6	23·9
Northamptonshire	88·9	69·6	36·5	31·7
Northumbria	80·3	74·9	45·5	36·5
North Yorkshire	91·0	76·1	33·6	21·6
Nottinghamshire	78·3	72·1	46·1	26·6
South Yorkshire	88·5	82·4	42·3	35·6
Staffordshire	86·5	88·9	39·0	34·4
Suffolk	90·3	84·3	36·6	23·7
Surrey	88·4	85·3	31·3	22·5
Sussex	87·3	69·0	41·6	17·8
Thames Valley	77·3	75·9	33.4	21·7
Warwickshire	90·6	83·4	41·6	34·3
West Mercia	89·6	87·5	34·9	34·1
West Midlands	64·7	61·9	27·5	31·2
West Yorkshire	82·2	68·3	47·9	38·1
Wiltshire	74·3	83·8	31·3	24·0
Dyfed-Powys	96·7	95·4	50·4	40·4
Gwent	92·1	89·4	45·0	33·0
North Wales	84·3	71·9	41·1	19·7

Police Force Area	*Violence against the person* 1978 Per cent.	1986 Per cent.	*Burglary* 1978 Per cent.	1986 Per cent.
South Wales	86·4	83·2	34·9	33·2
England and Wales	77·2	71·3	31·3	26·0

Prevention of Terrorism

Mr. Warren asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to make improved arrangements for police units at ports to assist enforcement of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: I have decided to establish a national co-ordinator of port policing, who will provide advice and assistance to chief officers of police on police work at ports, co-ordinate the work of police units, and represent them in liaison with other services involved in ports. The post of national co-ordinator will be at assistant chief constable rank.

The new arrangement adopts recommendations made by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary on the work of police operating the port controls provided by the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984. The new arrangements will operate initially for a trial period of two years.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Mathematics and Physical Sciences

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many *(a)* girls and *(b)* boys took one or more mathematics or physical science subject at (i) O-level and (ii) A-level in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Dunn: Information is not available in the precise form requested. The number and percentage of boys and girls leaving English schools in 1984-85 who had attempted *(a)* mathematics, and *(b)* physics in CSE and/or GCE examinations is shown in the table.

School leavers—England

	Boys Number (thousands)	Per cent.	*Girls* Number (thousands)	Per cent.
Leavers who had attempted GCE O-level or CSE in				
Mathematics	302·51	80·8	299·78	82·9
Physics	191·15	51·0	70·90	19·6
GCE A-level in				
Mathematics	38·30	10·2	17·76	4·9
Physics	30·51	8·1	8·44	2·3

Computers

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many computers are provided per 100 pupils in each local education authority in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools; and how many staff trained to teach computing there are in each local education authority.

Mrs. Rumbold: The 1985 survey of microcomputers in English schools, a copy of which is in the Library, found that there were on average 0·9 microcomputers per 100 pupils in primary schools and 1·7 per 100 pupils in secondary schools. Since then LEAs have purchased many more microcomputers for their schools both from their own resources and from funds available under the DTI IT Equipment for Schools offer. About 60 per cent. of teachers have received some training in the use of microcomputers in schools. No figures are available for individual local education authorities.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mrs. Rumbold: The value of contracts awarded by my Department for word processing hardware and software for the financial years in question is as follows:

	Wordplex Ltd. £	*AES Ltd.* £
1984-85		
Hardware	29,000	32,000
Software	—	—
1985-86		
Hardware	106,000	18,000
Software	1,000	—
1986-87		
Hardware	47,000	—
Software	15,000	—

For future years, it is the Department's intention to provide word processing facilities as part of its wider office systems strategy, and it is not possible to identify such expenditure separately.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department is undertaking a study into the extent to which desktop publishing systems would be useful in helping to meet its publication requirements. It has not purchased any such systems in the past, and currently has no plans for such expenditure.

Schools (Expenditure)

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish figures for 1985-86 and 1986-87 relating to *(a)* local authority expenditure in nursery, primary and secondary schools at (i) current prices and (ii) at 1984-85 prices using the Government gross domestic product deflator and *(b)* pupil numbers in nursery, primary and secondary schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: Net institutional recurrent spending on maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools in 1985-86 was as follows:

1985-86 provisional actual spending £ million (rounded)

	At 1985-86 outturn prices	*At 1984-85 prices*	*At 1987-88 prices*
Nursery schools	40	40	45
Primary schools	2,940	2,765	3,165
Secondary schools	4,050	3,810	4,360

Comparable information for 1986-87 is not yet available.

Financial year average pupil numbers for 1985-86 and 1986-87 are as follows:

	1985-86 (actual)	*1986-87 (projected)*
Pupils, thousands, full-time equivalents		
Nursery schools	31	31
Primary schools	3,651	3,667
Secondary schools	3,434	3,306

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the schools participating in the assisted places scheme and the fees charged by each school.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Schools (Decoration)

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish his Department's review of the internal decoration of schools.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: My Department has not undertaken such a review. The results of a general investigation on maintenance provision and practice in a sample of 16 local education authorities was reported in DES A and B Paper No. 7, published in 1984, copies of which are in the Library.

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what has been the average fee increase at schools participating in the assisted places scheme in each year since the scheme was introduced.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Since the assisted places scheme was introduced in 1981 the estimated average fee increase for assisted pupils at participating schools has been as follows:

Percentage increase over preceding year

School Year	*per cent*
1982-83	11
1983-84	12
1984-85	7
1985-86	7
1986-87	12

DEFENCE

Civil Defence

Mr. Redmond asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make available in the Library those parts of the United Kingdom Commander in Chief's committee home defence plan which would not compromise national security; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: This is a classified document and it is not our general practice, in response to specific queries, to break up documents in the way that would be entailed. The hon. Member may, however, find it helpful to refer to the "Home Office Emergency Planning Guidance to Local Authorities", a copy of which is in the Library. Although this is not in itself concerned with military Home Defence planning, the hon. Member may find it useful in the general context of his inquiry.

Expenditure

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the average per capita contribution to defence expenditure by the United Kingdom in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the Isle of Man, *(c)* Jersey and *(d)* Guernsey.

Mr. Stanley: The original provision for defence expenditure in 1986-87 was the equivalent of some £327 per capita in the United Kingdom.

The annual contribution made by the Isle of Man towards the cost of defence and other common services provided by the United Kingdom Government was equivalent to some £16 per capita in 1985-86, the last year for which figures are available. The island also provides military training facilities and a bombing range for the RAF.

No regular contributions to the costs of defence have been made by either Jersey or Guernsey, but I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department to my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) on 1 April 1987, at column 516, for details of the agreements that have been reached with the islands over future contributions.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Ministry of Defence procured, primarily through Her Majesty's Stationery Office, dedicated word processing hardware and associated word processing software software from the following companies:

Year and Company	*Total expenditure* £
1984-85	
Exxon/Vydec	1,566,000
AES	
CPT	
Phillips	
Rank Xerox	
Data Logic	
Olivetti	
Diamond (OTL)	
1985-86	
AES	1,184,000
CPT	
Phillips	
Rank Xerox	
Olivetti	
Logica	
Data Logic	
ICL	
Canon	
1986-87	
AES	2,106,000
CPT	
Phillips	
Amstrad	
ICL	
Wordplex	
Olivetti	
OEM	
Rank Xerox	
GEC Reliance	
Canon	
Wang	

General purpose hardware and word processing software with which it may be used are excluded.

Only the figures for total expenditure are readily available, but for reasons of commercial confidentiality it would in any case be improper for me to give details of individual contract value.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Expenditure on hardware dedicated to word processing, and word processing software, is not separately identifiable. Total expenditure was:

	£
1984-85	1,566,000
1985-86	1,184,000
1986-87	2,106,000

Projected expenditure for 1987-88 is about £1,200,000 and for 1988-89 about £1,320,000. General purpose hardware and word processing software with which it may be used are not included.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Since 1984 the Ministry of Defence has procured desktop publishing hardware and software through Her Majesty's Stationery Office, from Apple Macintosh and Rank Zerox. For reasons of commercial confidentiality it would be improper for me to give details of individual contract values.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984 and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Expenditure on hardware and software dedicated to desktop publishing is not separable. Total expenditure was:

	£
1984-85	Nil
1985-86	37,800
1986-87	17,000

Projected expenditure for 1987-88 is about £48,000 and for 1988-89 about £65,000.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Attorney-General if he will list those companies to which the Lord Chancellor's Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

The Attorney-General: The suppliers of word processing equipment to the Lord Chancellor's Department in the years 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 have been as follows:

International Business Machines Ltd.
Rank Zerox (UK) Ltd.
Wildings Office Equipment PLC

The value of each contract is a matter of commercial confidentiality.

Mr. Coombs asked the Attorney-General how much the Lord Chancellor's Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

The Attorney-General: The cost of word processing equipment purchased by the, Lord Chancellor's Department since 1984 is as follows:

	Hardware £	*Software* £
1984-85	31,000	5,000
1985-86	106,000	25,000
1986-87	12,000	4,000

Projected expenditure for the financial year 1987-88 is £50,000, and for 1988-89, £125,000.

Mr. Coombs asked the Attorney-General if he will list those companies to which the Lord Chancellor's Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

The Attorney-General: There has only been one set of desktop publishing equipment supplied to the Lord Chancellor's Department and this was purchased from Rank Xerox in the financial year 1985-86. For reasons of commercial confidentiality the value of the contract cannot be disclosed.

Mr. Coombs asked the Attorney-General how much the Lord Chancellor's Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

The Attorney-General: As there has only been one set of desktop publishing equipment supplied to the Lord Chancellor's Department since 1984 I am unable, due to the commercial confidentiality, to disclose the value of the contract.

There are no firm plans for any other system to be purchased in the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Michael Delaney

Mr. Shore asked the Attorney-General, further to his written answer of 6 May, and in the light of the 10 to one verdict of the coroner's court in the case of Michael Delaney, whether he will consider further the decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions not to prosecute the driver; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The Director of Public Prosecutions has reconsidered the decision made in the case referred to by the right hon. Member. However, the evidence given at the inquest into the death of Michael Delaney did not disclose any basis upon which a prosecution could be brought. The Director cannot, therefore, alter his original decision.

Unlawful Killing

Mr. Shore asked the Attorney-General in how many cases where a jury at a coroner's court has returned a verdict of unlawful killing the Director of Public Prosecutions has decided not to prosecute on the grounds of insufficient evidence since 1979.

The Attorney-General: Records are not kept of the information requested by the right hon. Member.

Crown Prosecution Service Staff Commission

Mr. Franks asked the Attorney-General whether he has received a report from the Crown Prosecution Service Staff Commission; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I have recently received the Report of the Crown Prosecution Service Staff Commission upon its work during the establishement of the new Service. Copies of the report are being distributed to interested parties, and I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the Library of the House.

The Chairman of the Staff Commission and his two commissioners have produced a most comprehensive and helpful report and I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for their endeavours.

ENVIRONMENT

London Docklands

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of houses and flats built on London Docklands Development Corporation owned land between January 1986 and December 1986 were sold to those on the waiting lists of the London boroughs of Newham, Tower Hamlets and Southwark.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West on 1 April 1987 at column *553*.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Ridley: For reasons of commercial confidentiality it is not possible to provide the names of companies to which such contracts have been awarded or the values of the contracts.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: The Department's expenditure on word processing hardware and software, which is delivered as one piece of equipment, was:

Year	*£*
1984-85	180,274
1985-86	243,862
1986-87	664,452

Estimated expenditure in 1987-88 is £500,000. No projections have been made for 1988-89.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Ridley: For reasons of commercial confidentiality it is not possible to provide the information in the form and level of detail requested by my hon. Friend.

The Department purchased one desktop publishing software package in 1986-87.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: The Department has spent £2,000 on desktop publishing software (in 1986-87). No specialised hardware has been purchased. No details are available for financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Planning Permission

Mr. Dykes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will examine possible ways of limiting the opportunities for developers to submit fresh applications for planning permissions for new developments in residential areas after their appeals against local authority decisions are dismissed by inspectors' inquiries.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. Such a limitation would unjustifiably restrict development which might reasonably be permitted if, for example, circumstances chanhed following the dismissal of an appeal or the developer revised his scheme to take account of objections. An appellant who unreasonably persists in taking a second appeal to inquiry may be at risk of having cost awarded against him.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultations were carried out with the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee and what representations were received from it *(a)* before his decision to abandon research on four possible low-level waste dumps and *(b)* subsequently.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee's views on shallow disposal of nuclear waste have been made clear in all of the committee's annual reports submitted to Ministers since 1983. There was no consultation with the Committee before my right hon. Friend's statement on 1 May, but I wrote to the Committee about the decision on the day of the statement. No representations have been received from the Committee since 1 May.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will tabulate the calculations made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee and *(c)* NIREX on the costs of disposal of low-level waste in shallow trenches.

Mr. Waldegrave: On calculations made by the Department, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the Assessment of Best Practicable Environmental Options for Management of Low and Intermediate-level Solid Radioactive Wastes published by HMSO in March 1986. On the calculations by NIREX, I have nothing to add to the letter from the chairman of NIREX to my right hon. Friend dated 1 May, which is in the Library of the House.

The Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee has made no calculations on the costs of disposal.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if there have been any changes in the composition of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee since his decision to cancel research for low-level nuclear sites.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

Green Belt

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if non-statutory green belt is included as applicable land in references to Government statements about its policy on protection of green belt land.

Mr. Waldegrave: Green belt policies apply to land which has been identified as green belt in approved structure plans. In most areas the detailed boundaries have been identified in local plans or in old development plans. Some non-green belt land situated between the urban area and the approved green belt boundary may be kept open for the time being through the normal process of development control.

Planning Inquiries

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what instructions he has given, or intends to give, to his planning inspectors to ensure that their decisions in planning inquiries are cognisant of current ministerial speeches and statements on planning policy.

Mr. Waldegrave: As a matter of course, the Department's planning inspectors are informed of all statements of policy which could be a material consideration in reaching decisions in planning cases.

Departmental Achievements

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list his principal achievements in the field of improving the environment; and what plans he has for the future.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 9 May 1986 at column *265* and my own statement of 4 February 1987 at column *726*. Since those statements we have continued to act to protect and enhance the environment.

The Govermnent have endorsed the Central Electricity Generating Board's plans to install low nitrogen oxide burners at its largest power stations, and at all future fossil-fuel fired power stations.

The Department has continued to promote the introduction of unleaded petrol, which is currently available at 260 service stations.

We sponsored the international pollution abatement fair and conference as a contribution to European Year of the Environment. At the conference I launched the environmental protection technology scheme, which aims to encourage innovation in the fields of pollution abatement and cleaner technologies.

Research on antifouling paints containing tributyl tin has increasingly shown them to be responsible for damage to marine life. Regulations were laid before the House on 7 May which will ban the retail supply of antifouling paints and treatments containing triorganotins, including TBT, from 28 May.

On 10 March the Government issued the Farming and Rural enterprise package which set out our policies for agriculture and for encouraging enterprise and development in rural areas.

On 8 May the Department issued the circular Development Involving Agricultural Land which stresses the importance of considering together the agricultural, environmental and economic aspects of planning proposals affecting agricultural land.

Blood Lead Monitoring Programme

Mr. Rathbone asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish the preliminary results of the blood lead monitoring programme for 1986.

Mr. Waldegrave: Preliminary analysis of results from the surveys carried out in 1986 as part of my Department's blood lead monitoring programme shows a continuing fall in levels. Compared with 1985 the blood leads of children surveyed fell by about 1·5 ug/100ml (16 per cent.); those of police officers on traffic duties by about 2 ug/100ml (18 per cent.); and those of other adults sampled by about 1 ug/100ml (10 per cent.).

Individually, the local surveys of children all showed falls in levels but these varied from 8 per cent. to 22 per cent. For exposed adults local changes varied from a fall of around 20 per cent. to a slight increase in one of the surveys. More detailed results will be made available in due course.

Housing Expenditure

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was Coventry city council's bid to central Government for housing expenditure, and what was his Department's allocation, for each year since 1979 expressed in 1987 prices.

Mr. Tracey [*pursuant to his answer*, 12 May 1987]: The position has changed since 1979, in that local housing authorities nationally now fund more than half their capital expenditure from capital receipts, rather than from housing investment programme allocations made by the Department. The proposed capital programmes shown by authorities in the HIP submissions cannot therefore be compared directly with their HIP allocations.

Since 1979 the final HIP allocations made to Coventry city council, and their total capital expenditure on housing, have been as follows:

£ million 1987-88 prices	*HIP allocation*	*Expenditure*
1979-80	23·908	27·137
1980-81	15·482	14·427
1981-82	10·260	12·340
1982-83	15·257	16·738
1983-84	9·624	11·893
1984-85	10·223	12·747
1985-86	8·295	20·099
1986-87	8·660	[1]18·396
1987-88	[2]6·166	—

[1] Estimated by the authority on form HIP2 in July 1986.

[2] Initial HIP allocation.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Teachers' (Pay and Conditions)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will place in the Library details of the composite package of proposals for pay and conditions of service of teachers in Northern Ireland referred to in his answer to the hon. Member for Woolwich of 27 April, *Official Report*, column 41.

Dr. Mawhinney: Yes, copies have been placed in the Library today.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information requested in respect of specific promotional campaigns is as follows:

	Number of occasions
National newspapers	
Financial Times	50
Times	7
Daily Telegraph	2
Guardian	2
Local Newspapers	
Belfast Telegraph	71
Derry Journal	50
Sentinel (Londonderry)	50
News Letter	25
Coleraine Chronicle	6
Irish News	4
Sunday News	2

Newspaper Publishing Groups receiving paid advertising

- Pearson Group
- News International
- Daily Telegraph PLC
- Guardian Newspapers Ltd.
- Thompson Newspapers Ltd.

	Number of occasions
Century Newspapers Ltd.	
Irish News Ltd.	
Northern Newspaper Group	
Ulster Associated Press Group	
Morton Newspaper Group	

Routine advertising such as job advertisements, contracts and statutory notices have been excluded.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89;

(3) if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desk top publishing hardware and desk top publishing software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(4) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desk top publishing hardware and *(b)* desk top publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Scott: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Job Release Schemes

Mr. Maples asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether parity is being maintained between job release schemes in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Mr. Viggers: Participants in the Northern Ireland full and part-time job release schemes will continue to receive allowances at the rates payable, in corresponding circumstances, under the parallel schemes in Great Britain. As from 6 April 1987 the new rates are:

Full-Time Scheme

For disabled men aged 60, 61, 62 and 63 who are married with a dependent wife whose net income from all sources does not exceed £13 a week, £74·50 a week, taxable; for all others £61·15 a week, taxable.

For women aged 59 and men aged 64 who are married with a dependent spouse whose net income from all sources does not exceed £13 a week, £67·55 a week, tax free; for all others £53·90 a week, tax free.

Part-Time Scheme

The part-time job release scheme closed on 30 May 1986. However, the rates of allowance for those who entered the scheme on or before that date will be as follows:

For disabled men aged 60 and 61 aged 62 and 63 who are married with a dependent wife whose net income from all sources does not exceed £13 a week, £43 a week, taxable; for all others £35·80 a week, taxable.

For women aged 59 and men aged 64 who are married with a dependent spouse whose net income from all sources does not exceed £13 a week, £38·05 a week, tax free, for all others £31·15, tax free.

EMPLOYMENT

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Paymaster General on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used for these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My Department in the last three years has advertised extensively in the national and local press to publicise its range of employment programmes as listed. Figures for the number of occasions on which the Department sponsored advertisements and a breakdown by newspaper publishing groups could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Bruce asked the Paymaster General if he will publish in the *Official Report* the percentage level of unemployment in each travel-to-work area for the latest available date and the number of community programme places in the nearest corresponding area in 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. Lee: Figures showing the numbers of unemployed claimants in the travel-to-work areas of the United Kingdom expressed as a percentage of employees in employment plus the unemployed on 12 March 1987 were published in table 2.4 of the May 1987 issue of the Employment Gazette, a copy of which is in the Library. Unemployment rates incorporating new employment estimates which take account of the 1984 census of employment results will be published on Thursday 14 May 1987. At that time revised unemployment rates will be available in the Library. Information about the number of community programme places is collected at community programme area office level. The following table shows the number of filled places in respect of each area office as on 31 March 1987, the latest date for which statistics are available, and the average number of filled places planned for 1987-88 in respect of the same offices.

Region/community programme area office	*Filled places as at 31 March 1987*	*Average planned for 1987-88*
South-east region		
Kent	3,292	2,800
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	2,049	1,980
Sussex	1,960	1,850
Reading	1,473	1,400
Surrey	476	490
High Wycombe	1,915	1,750
Essex	2,534	2,600
Total	13,699	12,870
London region		
North London	3,432	3,050
East London	3,074	3,080
Inner London north	5,091	4,620
Inner London south	3,230	3,540
West London	1,304	1,220
South London	1,744	1,590
Total	17,875	17,100

Region/community programme area office	*Filled places as at 31 March 1987*	*Average planned for 1987-88*
South-west region		
Devon east	2,066	2,035
Avon	4,640	4,240
Cornwall	2,395	2,272
Dorset	1,472	1,500
Gloucester	1,632	1,570
West Devon	2,023	1,953
Wiltshire	1,149	1,160
Somerset	1,076	1,020
Total	16,453	15,750
West midlands region		
Worcester	3,656	3,655
Coventry	3,784	3,674
Dudley/Sandwell	3,706	4,233
Wolverhampton	4,592	4,625
Birmingham	8,383	8,418
Staffordshire	4,067	3,945
Total	28,188	28,550
East midlands and eastern region		
Ipswich	1,570	1,485
Luton	2,171	2,101
Norwich	2,089	1,808
Derby	3,104	3,174
Leicester	2,432	2,404
Nottinghamshire	3,996	3,987
Lincoln	1,942	1,863
Northamptonshire	1,809	1,824
Total	19,113	18,646
Yorkshire and Humberside region		
Leeds	4,617	4,550
Bradford	5,510	5,500
Sheffield	6,152	6,100
Hull	2,387	2,449
North Yorkshire	1,397	1,450
Wakefield	1,702	1,650
Grimsby	2.109	2,151
Barnsley/Doncaster	3,941	4,050
Total	27,815	27,900
North-West Region		
Cumbria	1,944	1,926
South Lancs	3,157	2,922
Manchester North	2,609	2,639
Manchester City	3,287	3,539
Manchester East	2,759	2,830
Middleton	2,163	2,175
Manchester West	2,653	2,865
Merseyside Inner	5,538	5,565
Wirral	2,608	2,650
Lancs North	2,718	2,578
St. Helens	4,898	4,790
Cheshire	3,875	3,590
Total	38,209	38,069
Northern Region		
North Tyne	5,963	6,288
County Durham	7,135	6,516
Teeside	8,003	8,300
South Tyne	7,722	8,000
Total	28,823	29,104
Wales Region		
Gwent	3,848	3,630
Mid and South Glamorgan	7,372	7,075
West Wales	6,366	5,900
Clwyd/Powys	5,011	4,730
Total	22,597	21,335
Scotland Region		
Central/South Glasgow	3,214	3,668
North Glasgow	3,866	3,960
Hamilton	3,628	3,700
Paisley	2,480	2,639
Ayr	3,630	3,500
Highlands and Islands	1,092	993
Tayside and Grampian	2,972	3,110
Central and Fife	3,437	3,300
Lothian and Borders	3,938	3,770
Clydebank	2,415	2,250
Total	30,672	30,890

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Paymaster General how many redundancies were notified to his Department in the Grimsby travel-to-work area in each year since 1977.

Mr. Lee: Information relating to confirmed redundancies is given in the following table:

Redundancies confirmed as due to occur in Grimsby travel-to-work area

Year	*Number*
1977	188
1978	806
1979	0
1980	1,005
1981	1,886
1982	880
1983	1,436
1984	1,081
1985	332
1986	517

Note: The figures are based on notifications of redundancies confirmed as due to occur in the Grimsby jobcentre area which equates very closely to the Grimsby travel-to-work area.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Paymaster General if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Lee: For reasons of commercial confidentiality it is not possible to answer this question in the detail requested. However the following companies have supplied word processing equipment to the Department of Employment since 1984:

British Olivetti
Digital Equipment Company Ltd.
Rank Xerox
IBM
Wang UK
AES
ICL
Amstrad
Canon
Information Technology (UK)
OEM
Thorn—EMI
Lexisystems
Quest International
Hewlett Packard
Vistec

Mr. Coombs asked the Paymaster General how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Lee: For those parts of the Department for which figures are readily available, the figures are as follows:

	£
1984-85	226,000
1985-86	474,000
1986-87	662,000
1987-88	795,000
1988-89	710,000

Mr. Coombs asked the Paymaster General if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Lee: For reasons of commercial confidentiality it is not possible to answer this question in the detail requested. Since 1984, one contract to the value of £6,000 has been placed.

Mr. Coombs asked the Paymaster General how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Lee: The figures are as follows:

	£
1984-85	Nil
1985-86	Nil
1986-87	6,000
1987-88	20,000
1988-89	Nil

Restart

Mr. Hawksley asked the Paymaster General how many people were invited to attend jobcentres in Telford for the restart programme up to 31 March; how many attended; and if he will categorise the offers made.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *28*]: The information requested is available only for the Shropshire restart area. By 9 April 10,873 people had been invited for a restart interview of which 9,683 had already attended. The interviews provide a means of gaining access to the wide range of opportunities available to help people return to employment. A total of 88 per cent. of people interviewed were offered at least one of the following opportunities:

an interview for a job vacancy or a place on the community programme;
a place in a jobclub;
a training course;
an introduction to the enterprise allowance scheme;
a place on a restart course;
a chance to undertake voluntary work;
a referral for specialist help.

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General what is the advertising budget, split by type of media, for the promotion of the job training scheme; what proportion is aimed at potential trainers, and what proportion aimed at potential employers.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *28*]: In 1987-88 planned expenditure on advertising the new job training scheme is £5·3 million. Half the sum will be used to encourage employers to become involved in the scheme and half to draw the existence and objectives of the scheme to the attention of potential participants. Around 70 per cent. of the budget has been committed to TV and the remainder to other media. The expenditure represents around 2½ per cent. of the overall programme costs of the job training scheme in the first year.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Development and Disarmament

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what correlation exists in Her Majesty's Government's foreign policy between development and disarmament.

Mr. Renton: We believe that there is no automatic link between the process of disarmament, the reallocation of resources which may result from such a process, and the provision of development aid. The search for disarmament, improved international security, and development are equally important, and we remain committed to pursuing each of these aims.

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what ministerial and parliamentary representatives from the United Kingdom will attend the United nations conference on the relationship between disarmament and development in New York between 24 August and 11 September; what proposals Her Majesty's Government will make to the conference; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: A decision on the level of any United Kingdom participation at the conference, and on United Kingdom proposals, will be taken nearer the time.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Eggar: For reasons of commercial confidentiality, details of individual contracts cannot be given. However, total annual expenditure for financial years 1984 to 1987, and companies to which contracts have been awarded have been:

	Total expenditure £
Financial year 1984-85 Her Majesty's Stationery Office City Information Systems	249,037
Financial year 1985-86 Her Majesty's Stationery Office AT Computer World	262,101

	Total expenditure £
Wordnet International	
Ol Computers	
Financial year 1986-87	261,267
Her Majesty's Stationery Office	
Nexel	
West End Business Machines	
Ryman	
ICL	
Ol Computers	
Santiki Ltd.	
Estimated expenditure 1987-88	118,500
Estimated expenditure 1988-89	50,600

The figures include expenditure by both the diplomatic and aid wings of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and by overseas posts. For the latter, there is no central record of companies to which contracts have been awarded.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984;and what was the value of each contract;

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the finanical years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Eggar: The diplomatic wing of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office placed one contract through Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1986, at an approximate cost of £29,000. This was the price for the complete integrated system. £380 was spent on hardware update in 1987, and £12,000 to £13,000 is likely to be spent on the expansion and updating of this system in 1988.

Departmental Achievements

Mr Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list his principal achievements in the field of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs; and what plans he has for the future.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) on 19 February 1987 at column 801-9, and in particular to the foreign policy aspects of these answers. Since then our efforts to establish a more stable relationship between East and West culminated in the successful visit by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and myself and myself to the Soviet Union in March. Our talks with the Soviet leaders were candid and wide-ranging and demonstrated the value of frank and constructive discussion between us. At the end of April I visited Thailand, Australia and New Zealand to demonstrate our continuing interest in Asia and the Pacific. Overall, I have since February pursued our major objectives in the foreign policy field listed in the answer to the second of the questions from my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley. These objectives will continue to guide our policies in the future.

Hong Kong (Survey Office)

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to his answer of 7 May, *Offical Report*, column *528*, he will make it his policy to include in the terms of reference for the independent survey office the possibilty for oral representations to be made by those Hong Kong citizens who either cannot, or are not confident of being able to, make written representations.

Mr. Renton: Within the Survey Office's terms of reference arrangements will be made to ensure that those who are unwilling or unable to submit written representations are able to have their oral representations recorded.

WALES

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Word processing hardware and software has been purchased to the following values:

	£
1984-85	9,750
1985-86	29,011
1986-87	13,400

Most of the equipment was purchased from Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The manufacturers of the equipment purchased were Information Technology Ltd. (ITL), Hermes Precisa Ltd. and International Business Machines (IBM). To disclose details of individual contracts would be a breach of commercial confidence.

Current estimates provide for expenditure on word processing equipment of £103,500 in 1987-88 and £160,000 in 1988-89.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: My Department has not yet purchased any desktop publishing hardware or software. Sums of £75,000 and £40,000 have been provisionally earmarked in 1987-88 and 1988-89 respectively, for the purchase of such equipment.

National Health Service Estate

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the annual expenditure, in 1987 prices, from

1975-76 to date on repair, maintenance and improvement work on the Welsh National Health Service estate; what is his Department's estimate of the expenditure needed to bring the condition of the Welsh National Health Service estate to a fully reconditioned and repaired state, complying with up to date building standards, not including the reconditioning of parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or disposal, or the expected depreciation of the estate in this financial year; what is his Department's estimate of the annual expenditure to prevent the Welsh National Health Service estate's condition from deteriorating, excluding those parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or otherwise disposal; and what is the capital value of National Health Service buildings in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Labour Statistics

Mr. John Morris asked the Secretary of State for Wales what were the unemployment figures for April and May, in 1979 and 1983, and at the most recent available date for the Port Talbot and Neath travel-to-work areas.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: In March 1987 there were 6,664 persons unemployed in the Neath and Port Talbot travel-to-work area. This is equivalent to an unemployment rate of 13·1 per cent. The earliest data available for this travel-to-work area for a corresponding month for March 1984, when the figures were 8,241 and 16·3 per cent. respectively. These figures are not directly comparable because of a change in the method of compiling the statistics in March 1986.

PRIME MINISTER

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Prime Minister if she will list those companies to which her office has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984, and what was the value of each contract.

The Prime Minister: A contract for word processors for my office was awarded in 1984 to International Computers Limited in the order of £35,000. No other contracts have been awarded.

Other information technology systems which provide word processing facilities but which were intended primarily for other tasks, were purchased in 1984 and 1987 from ICL and Software Sciences Ltd.

Mr. Coombs asked the Prime Minister how much her office has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

The Prime Minister: The following table represents the past and projected expenditure on word processing hardware and software for my office for the years 1984 to 1988-89. Figures are given to the nearest £1,000.

Year	*Hardware* £	*Software*
1984	35,000	Nil
1985	Nil	Nil
1986	Nil	Nil
1987-88	Nil	Nil
1988-89	Nil	Nil

Mr. Coombs asked the Prime Minister if she will list those companies to which her office has awarded contracts for the supply of desk top publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

The Prime Minister: My office has not awarded any contracts for desk top publishing hardware or software.

Mr. Coombs asked the Prime Minister how much her office has spent on *(a)* desk top publishing hardware and *(b)* desk top publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

The Prime Minister: My office has not incurred any expenditure on desk top publishing hardware or software since 1984. There is no specific provision to acquire such systems in the financial years 1987-88 or 1988-89.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND

Perth Prison

40. **Mr. Fairbairn** asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland how many, and what, offences alleged to have been committed in Her Majesty's prison, Perth, have been prosecuted against prisoners in Her Majesty's prison, Perth, during the last year for which figures are available and for the previous 10 years, respectively.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: The information which is sought is not available from the Crown Office or prisons group, Scottish Home and Health Department.

Commissioner for Northern Lights

43. **Mr. Henderson** asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland how many official engagements he has carried out as ex-officio Commissioner for Northern Lights during the last 90 days.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: I have attended two meetings as ex-officio Commissioner for Northern Lights within the last 90 days.

Project Zircon

44. **Mr. Bill Walker** asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland if he has given any advice to procurators fiscal in relation to matters arising from police inquiries into Project Zircon.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: No.

TRANSPORT

Microlight Flying (Insurance)

Mr. Nicholas Baker asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will bring forward legislation to make compulsory third party insurance cover for microlight flying.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Owners of microlight aircraft are strictly liable, under section 76 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, for damage or injury caused to persons or property on the ground. It is up to individual owners to decide on the appropriate levels of third party insurance to meet their potential liabilities.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Moore: My Department has inserted advertisements in national newspapers on 14 occasions in the last three years.

The newspapers chosen were as follows:

Daily Express
Daily Mail
Daily Mirror
Daily Telegraph
Financial Times
Guardian
Independent
Star
Sun
Times
Today
Mail on Sunday
News of the World
Observer
People
Sunday Express
Sunday Mirror
Sunday Telegraph
Sunday Times

Local newspapers used to support these campaigns were as follows:

Standard (London)
Sunday Mail (Scotland)
Sunday Post (Scotland)
Birmingham Post
Manchester Evening News
Newcastle Journal
Nottingham Evening Post
Western Daily Press
Western Mail
Yorkshire Post
Aberdeen Press and Journal
Glasgow Herald
Scotsman
Belfast Telegraph
Folkestone Herald/Dover Express
Kent and Sussex Courier
Kentish Express
Kent Messenger Group
Sevenoaks Chronicle
South Kent Newspapers
South London Press
Surrey Mirror Series

Other advertising in local newspapers was undertaken but not in support of campaigns in national newspapers. The newspaper publishing groups receiving paid advertising space were as follows:

Express Newspapers
Sun Group Newspapers
Mirror Group Newspapers
Times Newspapers
D. C. Thompson Ltd
Thomson Regional Newspapers
Kent Messenger Group
South Kent Newspapers Group
East Surrey Newspapers Group

Recruitment and statutory notice advertising is not included in the above.

Roads (Expenditure)

Mr. Snape asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for 1987-88 taxation revenue and public road cost figures and also a table showing taxation revenue, attributed costs, revenue to costs ratio and the number of vehicles, including in the calculation the increased road maintenance expenditure announced at the time of the current year's Budget statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested is given in the following two tables. Further information on motor tax revenue and track costs will be given in the Department's annual paper "The allocation of road track costs", due to be published shortly.

Table 1—Road taxation revenue and roads costs in 1987-88: by vehicle class
Thousand £ million at 1987-88 prices/ratio

Vehicle class	*Number of vehicles*	*Road taxation revenue and road costs (£ million at 1987-88 prices[1])*					*Taxes to costs ratio*
		Road taxes					
		Fuel tax	*VED*	*Total*	*Road costs*	*Taxes less costs*	
							thousand
Cars, light vans and taxis	19,608	5,475	2,075	[2]7,550	2,335	5,215	3·2:1
Motorcycles	1,107	40	15	60	25	35	2·3:1
Buses and coaches	72	180	5	[3]185	215	−30	0·9:1
Goods vehicles over 1,525 tonnes unladen:							
Not over 3·5 tonnes gvw and non-plateable vehicles	143	50	20	70	25	45	2·7:1
Over 3·5 tonnes gvw	441	960	440	1,405	1,095	310	1·3:1
Other vehicles[4]	1,185	105	10	115	55	65	2·2:1
All vehicles	22,556	6,820	2,570	9,385	[5]3,750	5,640	2·5:1

[1] Rounded to the nearest five.
[2] Excludes car tax, expected to raise £1,100 million in 1987-88.
[3] Fuel tax rebate (£130 million) not deducted.
[4] Haulage, machines, 3-wheeled motor vehicles, crown, disabled and other vehicles exempt from VED; Previously, other vehicles were included with the main classes.
[5] Excludes £306 million allocated to pedestrians.

Table 2

Taxation revenue, attributed costs, revenue to cost ratios and numbers of vehicles in selected categories

	GVW (tonnes) over	*not over*	*Taxation revenue per vehicle* £	*Attributed costs, per vehicle*[2] £	*Taxes minus costs* £	*Revenue to costs ratio*	*Estimated number of vehicles at September 1987* 000s
Rigid vehicles							
2 axle		3·5	490	180	310	2·7:1	143
	3·5	7·5	770	410	360	1·9:1	154
	7·5	12	1,120	650	470	1·7:1	27
	12	13	1,490	920	570	1·6:1	20
	15	17	2,780	2,470	310	1·1:1	82
3 axle	23	25	4,140	3,950	190	1·1:1	26
4 axle	29	31	6,460	6,100	360	1·1:1	18
Articulated vehicles							
3 axle	23	25	4,280	3,120	1,170	1·4:1	2
4 axle	31	33	7,540	6,000	1,540	1·3:1	37
5 axle (2+3)	36	38	10,300	7,730	2,570	1·3:1	24
(3+2)	36	38	10,080	7,450	2,620	1·4:1	10
6 axle	36	38	8,590	6,060	2,530	1·4:1	3

Figures for costs and taxes are rounded to the nearest £10, so taxes minus costs may not equal the difference of the figures shown for taxes and costs.

LRT (Consultants Reports)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many reports from consultants have been commissioned by London Regional Transport; what were the subjects; what effect the findings will have in services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: No central record is kept in the Department of reports commissioned from consultants by London Regional Transport. This is a management matter for LRT. The hon. Member may care to write to the chairman.

LRT (Conditions of Service)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Transport what changes in conditions of service have been introduced in London Regional Transport during the last two years.

Mr. David Mitchell: Changes in conditions of service are managerial matters for London Regional Transport and their subsidiary companies.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Moore: For reasons of commercial confidentiality it is not possible to provide the names of companies to which such contracts have been awarded or the values of the contracts.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Moore: The Department's expenditure on word processing hardware and software, which is delivered as one piece of equipment, was:

	£
1984-85	117,162
1985-86	77,881
1986-87	14,958

Estimated expenditure in 1987-88 is £200,000. No projections have been made for 1988-89.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Moore: For reasons of commercial confidentiality it is not possible to provide the information in the form and level of detail requested by the hon. Member.

The Department has purchased two desktop publishing software packages, one in 1986-87 and one in 1987-88.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Moore: The Department has spent £5,000 on desktop publishing software (in 1986-87). No specialised hardware has been purchased. No details are available for financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

M25-M23 Interchange (Signs)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport why replacing signs and sign gantries on the M25-M23 interchange is likely to take six months; and whether he will consider a lane rental scheme for this work.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The installation of new signs and gantries has to be carried out in stages if traffic flow is to be maintained. A shorter period would require further traffic restrictions.

A change to a lane-rental scheme now would involve additional cost and delay.

AIDS

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has any plans to arrange for staff of his Department to be screened for antibodies to human immunodeficiency virus.

Mr. Moore [*pursuant to his reply*, 30 March 1987, c. *373*]: No.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether any current or former staff of his Department have been found to have developed AIDS or antibodies to human immunodeficiency virus.

Mr. Moore [*pursuant to his reply*, 30 March 1987, c. *373*]: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Health on Wednesday 22 April at column *628*.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to ensure that staff of his Department are warned about those homosexual and other activities which are deemed to involve a high risk of AIDS infection.

Mr. Moore [*pursuant to his reply*, 30 March 1987, c. *373*]: In April 1986 the Management and Personnel Office, after consulting the Chief Medical Officer, DHSS, circulated all Departments with guidance to managers and model notes for staff. My Department drew on those notes in providing notes for staff. I understand that copies of the guidance and model notes are available in the Library of the House. I expect to issue further guidance, drawing on the Department of Employment/HSE book "AIDS and Employment" shortly.

Drink-driving

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many road users, including pedestrians, pedal cyclists and children, were killed or injured on the roads by drivers with a raised blood alcohol level, and if he will provide distributions of casualties and rates by hour of day, for 1975 and 1985 separately, for *(a)* Scotland *(b)* England and Wales.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 April 1987, c. *71*]: The requested information has been tabulated. Because of its bulk, I have asked for it to be placed in the Library. Where the tables refer to "drink-drive" accidents, this means accidents where one or more drivers have failed a breath test or failed to provide a breath specimen.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Semiconductors and Circuit Boards

Mr. Richard Page asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current position over the different import duties on semiconductors and built-up circuit boards.

Mr. Alan Clark: The United Kingdom has long pressed for a reduction in the excessive level of import duty on semiconductors, with some success; the Community tariff on individual components was reduced from 17 per cent. to 14 per cent. during 1986. We hope to secure a further reduction during the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations.

Riding Hats (Korea)

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he is taking to stop the importation of substandard riding hats from the Republic of Korea and other countries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: We have introduced the Consumer Protection Bill which is now before the House, and which contains provisions to enable the extension of sound modern standards of safety to all consumer goods, whether imported or not, through a general safety requirement.

English Estates

Mr. Couchman asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about English Estates' investment plans in the current financial year and the provisional outturn for 1986-87.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I am pleased to announce that in this financial year English Estates should be able substantially to increase its investment in the assisted areas compared with last year. The precise amount to be invested by the corporation will be determined by how much it can generate from factory sales and rents, but the Government will be contributing grant-in-aid of £13 million towards the total. I have told English Estates that on this basis I will require them to generate sufficient resources to fund at least £37 million of investment in the assisted areas. In practice I expect the corporation to exceed this figure and I have given the board permission to invest up to £47 million if it can generate the necessary funds from its own resources. English Estates will need to be satisfied that there is a real demand for this increased investment, that it satisfies its customary value-for-money requirements and that it will not crowd out similar investment that could have been undertaken by the private sector.

Last year English Estates invested £33·5 million in the assisted areas, which was £1·5 million more than I had required. The corporation spent a further £2 million on the redevelopment of Chatham dockyard. The momentum of the Chatham development will be maintained in the current year without affecting the programme in the assisted areas, but I expect that the private sector will play an increasing part in funding this project over the next few years.

United Kingdom Engineering Contracts (Switzerland)

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list such information as is available to him on the number of British firms which have obtained major engineering contracts with: *(a)* the Swiss Government and *(b)* the Swiss National Railways in the last three years.

Mr. Giles Shaw: This information is not readily available within my Department, and could be obtained in the form requested only at disproportionate cost. Nor has it been possible for our consulate general in Zurich to obtain figures for purchases by the Swiss Government or the Swiss National Railways.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list those companies to which his

Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Butcher: The main suppliers of dedicated word processing hardware and software to the Department of Trade and Industry, central purchasing organisation since 1984 have been: BT (Merlin), GEC Reliance, ICL, Logica VTS, Olympia and Thorn EMI. The details of contracts placed are subject to commercial confidentiality.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Butcher: Expenditure by the central purchasing organisation of the Department of Trade and Industry on word processing hardware and software since 1984 has been, or is estimated to be, as follows:

	£
1984-85	556,000
1985-86	361,000
1986-87	234,000
1987-88	300,000
1988-89	350,000

The cost of word processing software is normally included in the price of dedicated word processors. The Department has also purchased microcomputers and other hardware for other applications. A small but unspecified amount of word processing is carried out as a secondary function on some of this hardware.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desktop publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Butcher: The central purchasing organisation of the Department of Trade and Industry did not purchase any desktop publishing hardware or software in the years 1984-85 or 1985-86. Limited purchasing took place in 1986-87 but the names of the companies concerned cannot be disclosed because of commercial confidentiality.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Butcher: Expenditure by the central purchasing organisation of the Department of Trade and Industry on desktop publishing hardware and software since 1984 has been, or is estimated to be, as follows:

	£
1984-85	Nil
1985-86	Nil
1986-87	28,000
1987-88	70,000
1988-89	50,000

The cost of desktop publishing software was included in the price of the hardware purchases and is not separately identifiable in the projected expenditure.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Unearned Income

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to the reply dated 8 April, *Official Report*, columns 267-9, concerning the income distribution of those of working age with unearned income, whether he will provide figures for the tax yield in the case of those with unearned income of more than £500 a year; and if he will provide like figures for those over working age.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The tables provide provisional estimates for 1987-88 of single people and married couples with investment income of more than £500 per annum, and their total income tax liabilities. Estimates for ranges other than the higher income ranges are likely to be incomplete as tax offices do not need to have comprehensive information about individuals' investment income on which the liability to basic rate tax has been satisfied at source.

Distribution of total income[1] *in 1987-88 for taxpaying single people and married couples with investment income of more than £500 per annum*

Numbers of incomes (thousands)

Total income[1] *(lower limit) £ per annum*	*Tax units*[2] *aged under 65*[3]			*Tax units*[2] *aged 65 and over*[3]		
	Single people	*Married couples with no wife's earned income*	*Married couples with wife's earned income*	*Single people*	*Married couples with no wife's earned income*	*Married couples with wife's earned income*
2,000	160	negligible	negligible	180	negligible	negligible
5,000	90	30	20	130	110	20
7,000	110	60	60	130	80	70
10,000	40	50	60	50	30	30
12,000	60	50	110	50	30	40
15,000	80	60	270	40	30	50
20,000	60	90	310	30	30	60
30,000	30	70	210	10	20	20
50,000	10	30	60	10	10	10

[1] Gross income for income tax purposes.

[2] Counting each married couple as one unit and combining the partners' incomes.

[3] A married couple is taken to be aged 65 or over if at least one partner is aged 65 or over.

Total income tax liabilities in 1987-88 for single people and married couples with investment incomes of more than £500 per annum
(£ million)

Total income[1] (lower limit) £ per annum	*Tax units[2] aged under 65[3]* Single people	Married couples with no wife's earned income	Married couples with wife's earned income	*Tax units[2] aged 65 and over[3]* Single people	Married couples with no wife's earned income	Married couples with wife's earned income
2,000	40	negligible	negligible	40	negligible	negligible
5,000	70	20	10	100	40	negligible
7,000	160	50	40	190	90	50
10,000	80	80	60	110	50	50
12,000	170	110	190	150	80	70
15,000	280	190	690	170	120	150
20,000	340	470	1,450	200	180	260
30,000	300	760	1,910	160	180	180
50,000	410	1,190	1,640	180	260	230

[1] Gross income for income tax purposes.
[2] Counting each married couple as one unit and combining the partners' incomes.
[3] A married couple is taken to be aged 65 or over if at least one partner is aged 65 or over.

Mortgage Interest Relief

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will provide an estimate of the saving to the Exchequer in a full year at the proposed rates of tax for 1987-88 of offsetting investment income against mortgage interest payments for relief from income tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The extent of any saving would depend upon the precise rules proposed for offsetting investment income against payments of mortgage interest and, in particular, on the way in which this restriction would impinge on the system of mortgage interest relief at source (MIRAS).

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the information on mortgages and the price of dwellings referred to in the reply of 26 July 1985, *Official Report*, column *873*; and if he will add a forecast for 1987.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 May 1987, c. *327*]: Information for 1983 to 1986 is in the table. A forecast for 1987 is not available.

On the assumption that mortgage interest rates remain at 11·25 per cent. for the rest of 1987-88, the cost of mortgage interest relief in 1987-88 is forecast to be £4,750 million, equivalent to about £570 per mortgagor.

Mortgage Advances by Building Societies

Year	*Advances for all purposes net of repayments (A) £ million*	*Gross advances for all purposes (B) £ million*	*of which: Gross advances for purchase of dwellings (C) £ million*	*Total estimated purchase price of dwellings on which advances in C were made (D) £ million*	*C as A percentage of D (E) per cent.*
1983	10,928	19,263	17,197	25,119	68·5
1984	14,572	24,034	21,537	31,522	68·3
1985	14,711	26,491	23,275	33,405	69·7
1986	19,072	36,619	31,407	45,055	69·7

Sources:
Financial Statistics—Tables 7.6 and 7.8.
Housing and Construction Statistics—Tables 1.9 and 1.13.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. McTaggart asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consideration is being given to ensure that sufficient facilities exist for customs clearance in Glasgow in relation to the Channel tunnel.

Mr. Peter Brooke: By using the normal transit procedures available for imports or exports, Channel tunnel freight traffic will be able to obtain Customs clearance at any approved inland clearance depot. Such depots are provided by commercial operators subject to approval by Customs who take into consideration the expected volume of business, the availability of other clearance facilities in the vicinity and the effective and economical use of Customs staff. There is an approved inland clearance depot in the Glasgow area.

Advertising

Mr. Hanley asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Brooke: In addition to ongoing recruitment advertising, the Treasury has sponsored an advertising campaign on two occasions in the last three years. These were for the Britoil 1985 and Cable and Wireless 1985 Government share sales. Tables giving the newspapers used, and the respective publishing groups, are as follows:

Recruitment Advertising

Name of Newspaper	*Name of Publishing Group*
National newspapers	
Nil	Nil
Local Newspapers	
Kentish Times	Westminster Press
South London Press	South London Press Ltd.
Manchester Evening News	Guardian and Manchester Evening News Plc.
Brentford Chiswick and Isleworth Times	Dimbleby and Sons Ltd.
South Essex Recorder	Recorder Group
South Yorkshire Times	Doncaster Free Press Group
Waltham Forest Guardian	Electrical Press Group
Economist	Economist Newspaper Ltd.
Barnsley Chronicle	Barnsley Chronicle Ltd.
Westminster and Pimlico News	London Newspaper Group
Girl About town	Girl About Town Magazine Ltd.
Western Evening Herald	n.a.
Western Morning News	n.a.
Yorkshire Evening Post	Yorkshire Post Newspapers
Fulham Chronicle	London and Westminster Newspapers
Richmond and Twickenham Guardian	n.a.
Ealing and Chiswick Guardian	South London Guardian Group
Camden New Journal	n.a.
Camden and St. Pancras Chronicle	Hackney Gazette Ltd.
Hackney Gazette and North London Advertiser	Hackney Gazette Ltd.
Kensington and Chelsea Times	Metropolitan Communications Ltd.
Gloucestershire Echo	Cheltenham Newspaper Ltd.
Biggleswade Chronicle	Bedford County Press
Surrey Advertiser	LA Cade Partnership
The Citizen	Gloucestershire Newspapers Ltd.
Bicester Review	Bucks and Herts Newspaper Ltd.
Basingstoke Gazette	Bird Bros. Ltd.
Edinburgh Evening News	n.a.
Bicester Advertiser	Oxford and County Newspapers
Caterer and Hotelkeeper	Consumer Industries Press
Scotsman	Scotsman Publications
Glasgow Herald	George Outram and Co. Ltd.
Bristol Evening Post	n.a.
Bath and West Evening Chronicle	Wessex Newspapers
The News	Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers Ltd.
Liverpool Echo	Liverpool Daily Post and Echo Ltd.
Evening News and Star	n.a.
Worcester Evening News	n.a.
Malvern Gazette	Berrows Newspapers Ltd.
Berrows Journal	Berrows Newspapers Ltd.
Borehamwood Elstree and Edgeware Post	n.a.
Buckingham and Winslow Advertiser	Bucks and Herts Newspaper Ltd.
Oxford Star	Oxford and County Newspapers
Cheltenham and Gloucester Echo	n.a.
Falkirk Herald	Johnston (Falkirk) Ltd.
Fulham Guardian	South London Guardian Group
West London Guardian	n.a.
West London Recorder	n.a.
Basingstoke Gazette Extra	Bird Bros. Ltd.
Wandsworth and Putney Advertiser	n.a.
Glasgow South and Eastwood Extra	n.a.
Lancashire World	n.a.
Hamilton Advertiser	Scottish and Universal Newspapers
Glasgow Evening Times	n.a.
Liverpool Daily Post	Liverpool Daily Post and Echo Ltd.
Sevenoaks Chronicle	Sevenoaks Chronicle Ltd.
Bromley Times	London and Westminster Press Ltd.
St. Albans and District Observer	Westminster Press Ltd.
London Standard	Express Newspapers

Cable and Wireless Share Sale 1985

Name of Newspapers	*Name of Publishing Group*
National Newspaper	
Sunday Times	News Group Newspapers
Observer	Observer Ltd.
Sunday Express	Express Newspapers
Sunday Telegraph	Sunday Telegraph plc
Financial Times	FT Ltd. (Pearsons plc)
Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph plc
Times	News Group
Daily Mail	Associated Newspapers Group
Daily Express	Express Newspapers
Guardian	Guardian and Manchester Evening News Ltd.
Local Newspapers	
Standard	Express Newspapers
Scotsman	Scotsman Publications
Glasgow Herald	George Outram & Co. Ltd.
Belfast Telegraph	Belfast Telegraph Newspapers Ltd.
Birmingham Post	Birmingham Post and Mail Group
Daily Post	Liverpool Daily Post and Echo Ltd.
Aberdeen Press & Journal	Aberdeen Journal Ltd.
Dundee Courier	D. C. Thomson & Co. Ltd.
Morning Telegraph (Sheffield)	n.a.
Yorkshire Post	Yorkshire Post Newspapers
Western Mail	Western Mail and Echo Ltd.
Periodicals	
Economist	Economist Newspapers Ltd.
Investors Chronicle	Financial Times Business Publishing Ltd.
Financial Weekly	Financial Weekly Ltd.

Britoil Share Sale 1985

Name of Newspaper	*Name of Publishing Group*
National Newspapers	
Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph plc.
Financial times	FT Ltd. (Pearson plc.)
The Times	News Group Newspapers
Guardian	Guardian and Manchester Evening News Ltd.
Daily Express	Express Newspapers
Daily Mail	Associated Newspapers Group
Sunday Express	Express Newspapers
Sunday Telegraph	Sunday Telegraph plc.
Sunday Times	News Group Newspapers
Observer	Observer Ltd.
Mail on Sunday	Associated Newspapers Group
Local Newspapers	
Standard	Express Newspapers
Aberdeen Press and Journal	Aberdeen Journals Ltd.
Glasgow Herald	George Outram and Co. Ltd.
Scotsman	Scotsman Publications
Dundee Courier	D. C. Thomson and Co. Ltd.

Name of Newspaper	*Name of Publishing Group*
Belfast Telegraph	Belfast Telegraph Newspapers Ltd.
Birmingham Post	Birmingham Post and Mail Group
Yorkshire Post	Yorkshire Post Newspapers Ltd.
Belfast newsletter	Century Newspapers Ltd.
Manchester Evening News	Manchester Evening News Ltd.
Western Daily Press	Bristol United Press Ltd.
Periodicals	
Investors Chronicle	FT Business Publishing Ltd.
Economist	Economist Newspaper Ltd.
International Newspapers	
International Herald Tribune	n.a.
Wall Street Journal (Europe)	n.a.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list those companies that have been awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984 by *(a)* Her Majesty's Treasury, *(b)* the Board if Inland Revenue and *(c)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise; and what was the value of contract.

Mr. Brooke: Her Majesty's Treasury has not purchased any dedicated word processing hardware since 1984, other than a small number of portable text processors and associated printers from Thorn EMI. Total: value in:

	£
1984-85	—
1985-86	30,000
1986-87	25,000

Word processing software has been purchased from Casu, Comart, IBM and International Software Ltd. Total value in:

	£
1984-85	1,000
1985-86	500
1986-87	1,000

For reasons of commercial confidentiality, details of individual contracts cannot be given.

The Board of Inland Revenue awarded contracts for word processing equipment to IBM(UK) Ltd (directly and via various dealers), and ICL, in the years mentioned. In year 1986-87 contracts were also awarded via HMSO to Amstrad and Olivetti. Total value in:

	Hardware £	*Software* £
1984-85	214,000	12,000
1985-86	208,200	13,500
1986-87	89,200	22,700

For reasons of commercial confidentiality, details of individual contracts cannot be given.

Her Majesty's Customs and Excise awarded contracts for word processing software and hardware as follows:

Companies (purchased via HMSO)	*Total Amount* £
1984-85	
Olivetti, AES, Exxon, Rank Xerox.	103,000
1985-86	
Olivetti, AES, Rank Xerox, Ferranti, Facit , Silver Reed.	165,620
1986-87	
Olivetti, AES, Rank Xerox, Ferranti.	262,500

Hardware and software were purchased together on one contract and it is impossible to show them separately.

For reasons of commercial confidentiality, details of individual contracts cannot be given.

Mr. Coombs asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much *(a)* Her Majesty's Treasury, *(b)* the Board of Inland Revenue and *(c)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise have spent on (i) word processing hardware and (ii) word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Brooke: Her Majesty's Treasury's spend on word processing hardware and software is as follows:

	Hardware £	*Software* £
1984-85	Nil	1,000
1985-86	30,000	500
1986-87	25,000	1,000

The Treasury has no plans to purchase any dedicated word processors in 1987-88 and 1988-89.

The Board of Inland Revenue's spend on word processing hardware and software is as follows:

	Hardware £	*Software* £
1984-85	214,000	12,000
1985-86	208,200	13,500
1986-87	89,200	22,700
Projected spend:		
1987-88	138,900	24,500
1988-89	200,000	20,000

Her Majesty's Customs and Excise spend on word processing hardware and software is as follows:

	£
1984-85	103,000
1985-86	165,620
1986-87	262,500
Projected spend:	
1987-88	160,000
1988-89	160,000

Hardware and software were purchased together on one contract and it is impossible to show them separately.

Mr. Coombs asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list those companies that have been awarded contracts for the supply of desk top publishing equipment in each year since 1984 by *(a)* Her Majesty's Treasury, *(b)* the Board of Inland Revenue and *(c)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Brooke: Her Majesty's Treasury has placed contracts with Apple Computers (UK) Ltd., Gestetner

Ltd., Compel, Action Data, Artificial Intelligence Ltd., Computerland, Jarrold Office Equipment and Rank Xerox for desk top publishing equipment in the years mentioned. Total value in:

	£
1984-85	20,900
1985-86	220
1986-87	54,880

For reasons of commercial confidentiality, details of individual contracts cannot be given.

The Board of Inland Revenue placed contracts with ICL, Norsk Data, Scandata, Linotron and Apple for desk top publishing equipment in the years mentioned. Total value in:

	Hardware £	*Software* £
1984-85	21,000	4,000
1985-86	[1]265,800	—
1986-87	13,300	1,000

[1] Including software.

For reasons of commercial confidentiality, details of individual contracts cannot be given.

Her Majesty's Customs and Excise placed contracts with Gestetner via HMSO. Total value in:

	£
1984-85	0
1985-86	0
1986-87	[1]742,400

[1] Including software.

For reasons of commercial confidentiality, details of individual contracts cannot be given.

Mr. Coombs asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much *(a)* Her Majesty's Treasury, *(b)* the Board of Inland Revenue and *(c)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise have spent on (i) desk top publishing hardware and (ii) desk top publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Brooke: Her Majesty's Treasury spent the following on desk top publishing hardware and software:

	£
1984-85	20,900
1985-86	220
1986-87	54,880

The Treasury has no firm plans to purchase any desk top publishing equipment in 1987-88 and 1988-89.

The Board of Inland Revenue spent the following on desk top publishing hardware and software:

	Hardware £	*Software* £
1984-85	21,000	4,000
1985-86	[1]265,000	—
1986-87	13,300	1,000
Projected spend:		
1987-88	197,100	18,600
1988-89	[1]450,000	—

[1] Including software

A study is currently taking place which may have an effect on the totals shown in 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Her Majesty's Customs and Excise spent the following on desk top hardware and software:

	£
1984-85	0
1985-86	0
1986-87	[1]42,400
Projected spend:	
1987-88	[1]50,000
1988-89	[1]50,000

[1] Including software

Earned Income

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, further to his reply dated 8 April, *Official Report*, columns *264-66*, showing the distribution of total incomes by tax category and income range, he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing on the same basis the number of tax units with earned income.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Nearly all single people and married couples who pay tax have some source of earned income (including pensions). The estimates by range of total income provided in the earlier reply would not therefore change if restricted to tax units with earned income.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, pursuant to his reply dated 6 April, *Official Report*, column *74*, showing the average unearned income and average amount of mortgage interest relief in each income band at higher rates, he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of incomes in each of these two categories in the same detail.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Private Schools

Mr. Radice asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax revenue it is estimated his Department loses as a result of the charitable status enjoyed by private schools.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Consignments (Customs Clearance)

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will amend the Customs requirements for express parcels services to reflect the transit times demanded by the international business community.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *433*]: There are no plans to amend the Customs requirements so as to provide exceptional treatment for express parcels services.

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will instruct Her Majesty's Customs and Excise to review its treatment of express parcels.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *433*]: Customs already reviews its procedures when necessary, especially in the light of any international proposal for change. I have no plans to ask Customs to carry out a special review.

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received regarding the Customs treatment of express parcel services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *433*]: I have received very few representations about the Customs treatment of express parcels. Customs has regular meetings with the trade associations concerned and it is aware of the importance of the rapid and efficient clearance of this traffic.

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to support the principle of rapid Customs clearance for urgent consignments in meetings of the Customs Co-operation Council.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *433*]: At meetings of the Customs Co-operation Council and elsewhere, the United Kingdom supports the principle of rapid clearance for all goods, consistent with the need for adequate Customs control and the efficient use of resources.

Express Mail (Customs Duties)

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received a copy of the recent survey conducted by Peat Marwick, McLintock into the Customs collection of duty and value added tax on items shipped by expressed mail; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 May 1987, c. *433-34*]: Customs received a copy of the survey recently. Its contents are being considered.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Health Care Research

Mr. Raynsford asked the Secretary of State for Social Services in which specific areas of health care research reductions in expenditure have been planned in the financial year 1987-88.

Mrs. Currie: We have no such plans.

Chiropodists (West Essex)

Mr. Hayes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to improve the provision of chiropodists in the West Essex health authority.

Mr. Newton: The provision of chiropody services is a responsibility of the West Essex health authority and my hon. Friend may care to write to its chairman about the authority's plans. However, I understand that the West Essex health authority plans to recruit a number of chiropodists to improve the service provided to the district in the near future.

Hepatitis

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey of 23 March, *Official Report*, column *82*, what advice he has issued or intends to issue to health authorities on the vaccination of their staff against hepatitis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I cannot add to the reply I gave the hon. Member on 23 March at column *82*. We shall issue advice as soon as we are in a position to do so.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Newton: The information is not readily available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, the selection of media used in the Department's campaigns is on the basis of the most cost-effective means of reaching target audiences. For some local campaigns, local newspapers can play an important role and are included in the schedule. Examples of such campaigns include blood donors, the latest phases of the AIDS campaign and the winter campaign to publicise the extra help available towards heating costs.

AIDS

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what allowances are being authorised for dentists to equip themselves suitably to deal with AIDS and potential AIDS sufferers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Simple procedures such as the use of fresh disposable needles, proper sterilisation of all non-disposable instruments and the wearing of gloves by the dentist and all staff assisting at the chairside, should be routinely employed for all patients seeking dental treatment. Guidance to this effect was issued to all dentists in April of last year by the chief dental officer. The costs of these procedures, like all other practice expenses, are reimbursed indirectly through the fees paid to dentists for the treatment they provide.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the percentage of households which have received the Government's AIDS leaflet to date.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 May 1987, c. *504*]: Research carried out for the Department has shown that 93 per cent. of households received the AIDS leaflet by direct delivery. This figure is recognised as a very high level of performance and was only achieved through the excellent co-operation of the Post Office and its staff.

The greatest delivery problems for the Post Office related to dwellings over shops and to conversions where occupier contact was difficult to establish.

To ensure the widest access to the leaflet, additional copies were made available through main post offices, citizens advice bureaux and other organisations.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89;

(3) if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desk top publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract;

(4) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desk top publishing hardware and *(b)* desk top publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Lyell: The companies awarded contracts for the supply of systems procured principally or exclusively for word processing for each year since 1984 are:

1984-85
  OEM
  Wordplex
  Data Recall
  Xerox
  British Olivetti
  CPT
  ITL
  Philips
  ICL
1985-86
  Wang
  OEM
  Wordplex
  Canon
  Keyword System
  British Olivetti
  Kalle Infotec
  Thorn-EMI
  Microvitec
1986-87
  IBM
  Sumlock
  Wang
  Diamond
  Thorn-EMI
  Ferranti
  Olivetti
  Wordplex
  Canon
  ITL
  GEC Reliance
1987-88
  Adler
  GEC Reliance
  ICL
  Wang
  IBM
  Olivetti
  Thorn-EMI

The value of each contract is not disclosed. It would be improper for reasons of commercial confidentiality to do so. The overall expenditure with all companies for each year is:

	£
1984-85	273,910
1985-86	676,458
1986-87	669,641
[1]1987-88	232,549

[1] Thus far.

Separate figures for hardware and software cannot be given as contracts were generally placed for integrated packages.

The projected expenditure on word processing is:

	£
Remainder of 1987-88	959,000
1988-89	1,009,000

No contracts have been awarded in the period since 1984 for desk top publishing hardware and software, though we have allocated approximately £22,000 for hardware and £1,000 for software purchasing during the remainder of this financial year. No further estimates of projected expenditure for 1988-89 have been made.

Health Authorities

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each area health authority the district health authorities into which it was divided in 1982.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested by the hon. Member is set out in schedule 1 part 2 and schedule 3 of the National Health Service (Determination of Districts) Order 1981; Statutory Instrument 1981 No. 1837. A copy is available in the Library.

Benefit Overpayment (Wick)

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why, in view of the recommendation which the social security appeal tribunal held in Wick on 20 November 1986, made in the case of a constituent of the hon. Member for Caithness and Suntherland (Tribunal Registration No. 2/06) that he should not recover an overpayment which had arisen, his Department is seeking to do so; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lyell: Questions as to whether an overpayment of benefit has occurred and whether the overpayment is recoverable are for the independent adjudicating authorities to decide. Once they have decided that an overpayment is recoverable, it is for the Secretary of State to decide whether recovery should be pursued. In the case to which the hon. Member refers the tribunal decided that his constituent had been overpaid and that the amount was recoverable. I have written to the hon. Member further to my letter of 27 April about his constituent's case.

Benefits

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide his latest available figure for the numbers of people claiming social security benefits for each Department of Health and Social Security office in Scotland.

Mr. Lyell: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish details of the changes in total statutory sick pay and sickness benefit expenditure on short-term sickness in each year from 1983-84 to 1986-87 that resulted from the introduction of statutory sick pay and the April 1986 changes showing, as far as possible *(a)* expenditure changes that resulted from the replacement of sickness benefit rates with a different structure of statutory sick pay rates, *(b)* expenditure changes that resulted from administrative changes, *(c)* estimated revenue from statutory sick pay tax and national insurance liability and *(d)* the expenditure effects of other changes;

(2) if he will publish details of total expenditure on short-term sickness in each year from 1979-80 to 1986-87 showing, as far as possible *(a)* a breakdown of expenditure between sickness benefit and statutory sick pay, *(b)* a breakdown between administrative costs and actual payments of the two types of support, *(c)* the average weekly payment made under the two types of provision and *(d)* supplementary benefit and related housing benefit expenditure on the short-term sick;

(3) if he will publish details of claims for statutory sick pay and expenditure on statutory sick pay for each year of its operation showing, as far as possible *(a)* the total number of claims and payments made, *(b)* the extent of overpayment and underpayment by employers, *(c)* total expenditure on the scheme, *(d)* a breakdown of this expenditure between statutory sick pay payments and administrative costs and *(e)* an estimate of the costs of statutory sick pay payments net of tax and national insurance revenue.

Mr. Lyell [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 May 1987, c. *370*]: Information to enable an analysis to be provided in the detail requested is not readily available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost. The available information is shown in the table.

Expenditure on Short-term Sickness

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Sickness benefit expenditure (£m)	660	650	680	550	270	280	280	160
Statutory sick pay expenditure (£m)[1]	—	—	—	—	440	520	560	680
Expenditure on supplementary benefit and housing benefit to the short-term sick (£m)[2]	20	40	40	60	80	100	110	100
Total expenditure (£m)	680	690	720	610	790	900	950	940
Average weekly payment of sickness benefit (£)	25·62	28·81	29·28	26·88	29·87	29·70	33·06	31·67
Standard rate weekly payment of SSP (£)[3]	—	—	—	—	40·25	42·25	44·35	46·75
Number of SSP payments[4]	—	—	—	—	5M	5·7M	5.9M	—
Overpayments of SSP[5]	—	—	—	—	—	400,000	450,000	430,000
Underpayments of SSP (£)[5]	—	—	—	—	—	190,000	200,000	160,000

[1] The expenditure figures are for benefit only. The 1986-87 figures are estimates.

[2] Estimated.

[3] Information is not available of the average weekly payment of SSP, but it is estimated that about 85 per cent. are paid at the standard rate. These are the amounts shown.

[4] These figures relate to the number of individual tax documents showing SSP as having been paid. They do not therefore take account of more than one spell of SSP by a person with the same employer in a tax year.

[5] Information about the extent of overpayments and underpayments of SSP was not collected prior to September 1984. The 1984-85 and 1986-87 figures relate to only three quarters.

Overseas Doctors Association

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met the Overseas Doctors Association: what was discussed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Ministers from this Department have met the Overseas Doctors Association on several occasions. My right hon. Friend has not yet met the association but is scheduled to do so shortly.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received from the Overseas Doctors Association about its financial position.

Mr. Newton: The Department provides an annual grant to the Overseas Doctors Association under section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968. The level of the grant is periodically reviewed. We are not aware of having received any representations from the association about its financial position.

Institute of Transcultural Health Care

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will seek to meet representatives of the Institute of Transcultural Health Care, Leicester, to discuss its aims for health care.

Mr. Newton: We are aware of the welcome initiative taken by the Overseas Doctors Association in establishing this Institute and any request for a meeting would be considered sympathetically.

X-ray Screening Units

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many mobile X-ray screening units are operating within the National Health Service; and if he will list them by region.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not available centrally.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the total number of beds in each area health authority in 1979.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is given in the table.

Average daily number of available beds by area health authority, England, 1979

Area Health Authority	*Number*
Northern RHA	
Cleveland	3,830·7
Cumbria	3,575·6
Durham	5,139·8
Northumberland	3,995·8
Gateshead	1,368·2
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	3,479·2
North Tyneside	719·0
South Tyneside	770·7
Sunderland	2,426·3
Yorkshire RHA	
Humberside	6,119·0
North Yorkshire	5,105·8
Bradford	4,249·6
Calderdale	1,370·2
Kirklees	3,401·8
Leeds	6,238·8
Wakefield	3,460·4
Trent RHA	
Derbyshire	5,930·2
Leicestershire	5,140·2
Lincolnshire	4,708·5
Nottinghamshire	6,597·9
Barnsley	962·1
Doncaster	1,808·4
Rotherham	1,331·1
Sheffield	5,233·3
East Anglian RHA	
Cambridgeshire	3,522·4
Norfolk	5,609·9
Suffolk	3,961·3
North West Thames RHA	
Bedfordshire	2,885·8
Hertfordshire	7,350·2
Barnet	2,840·7
Brent/Harrow	3,224·0
Ealing/Hammersmith/Hounslow	4,397·0
Hillingdon	1,627·5
Kensington and Chelsea/Westminster	5,579·3
North East Thames RHA	
Essex	9,749·0
Barking/Havering	3,283·2
Camden/Islington	4,483·3
City and East London	4,492·2
Enfield/Haringey	2,469·6
Redbridge/Waltham Forest	4,965·5
South East Thames RHA	
East Sussex	4,674·9
Kent	11,725·2
Greenwich/Bexley	3,430·1
Bromley	2,590·8
Lambeth/Southwark/Lewisham	5,986·9
South West Thames RHA	
Surrey	10,891·5
West Sussex	3,763·7
Croydon	3,191·8
Kingston/Richmond	2,104·7
Merton/Sutton/Wandsworth	6,290·3
Wessex RHA	
Dorset	3,830·2
Hampshire	8,724·5
Wiltshire	5,520·5
Isle of Wight	946·0
Oxford RHA	
Berkshire	4,760·7
Buckinghamshire	2,649·8
Northamptonshire	2,965·5
Oxfordshire	3,288·4
South Western RHA	
Avon	7,419·6
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	2,670·2
Devon	7,715·1
Gloucestershire	3,173·7
Somerset	3,477·7
West Midlands RHA	
Hereford and Worcester	5,397·6
Salop	2,602·5
Staffordshire	6,377·3
Warwickshire	3,605·6
Birmingham	9,960·7
Coventry	1,871·3
Dudley	1,491·8
Sandwell	747·2
Solihull	904·8
Walsall	1,761·9
Wolverhampton	1,542·6
Mersey RHA	
Cheshire	9,356·0
Liverpool	5,573·7
St. Helens with Knowsley	1,183·6
Sefton	3,078·8
Wirral	2,789·4
North Western RHA	
Lancashire	13,193·5
Bolton	1,360·8
Bury	716·2
Manchester	5,585·0
Oldham	1,044·9
Rochdale	953·1
Salford	3,097·6
Stockport	1,677·1
Tameside	868·9
Trafford	835·9
Wigan	1,478·5
Special Health Authorities	
The Hospital for sick children	517·4
National Hospital for Nervous Diseases	356·5
Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital	116·0
Moorfields Eye Hospital	207·7
Maudsley Hospital	471·9
St. Johns Hospital for Diseases of the skin	54·7
National Heart and Chest Hospitals	602·9
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospitals	330·6
St. Peter's Hospital Group	122·7
Royal Marsden Hospital	360·7
Queen Charlotte's Hospital for Women	277·5
Eastman Dental	0·0

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give *(a)* the number of acute beds and *(b)* the total number of beds in hospitals in (i) inner London and (ii) Greater London in both 1979 and in the latest year for which the figures are available.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Brook Advisory Centre

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals he has to finance the Brook Advisory Centre, Tottenham Court road, W.C.1.

Mr. Newton: We have no such proposals. The Tottenham Court road Brook Advisory Centre receives funding from Bloomsbury health authority and the level of grant is for it to determine.

Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Special Health Authority

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how much has been made available in the recent allocation to the Bethlem Royal and Maudsley special health authority;

(2) what is the percentage change between 1986 and the current year in the allocation to the Bethlem Royal and Maudsley special health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The Bethlem Royal and Maudsley special health authority was notified on 31 March that its revenue cash limit for 1987-88 was £20,202,000. This sum, which includes £119,000 from the £15 million special fund, represents an increase over 1986-87 of 5·6 per cent. The SHA will be notified shortly of its share of the additional resources we have made available following my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's announcement on the 1987 review body awards.

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will grant an additional allocation for the inherited overspend in the special health authority for the Bethlem Royal and Maudsley.

Mrs. Currie: No. Health authorities are required to contain expenditure within their cash limits, and I understand action has been taken by the health authority to enable them to keep within their budget by 31 March 1988.

Maudsley Hospital

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the terms of the allocation of £200,000 for upgrading and decoration of the wards at Maudsley hospital; and if this sum will be made available annually.

Mrs. Currie: The Maudsley hospital is managed by a postgraduate special health authority funded directly by the Department. In light of particular pressures associated with delay in the start of construction of replacement wards, on which work has now begun at a cost of some £3 million, it was possible to allocate an additional £100,000 to effect limited upgrading last year. I understand a similar sum will be found from the authority's "small schemes allocation" this year. Routine maintenance and redecoration are the responsibility of health authorities and must be budgeted within allocated resources.

NHS Estate

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the annual expenditure, in 1987 prices, from 1975-76 to date on repair, maintenance and improvement work on the English National Health Service estate; what is his Department's estimate of the expenditure needed to bring the condition of the English National Health Service estate to a fully reconditioned and repaired state, complying with up to date building standards, not including the reconditioning of parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or disposal, or the expected depreciation of the estate in the current financial year; what is his Department's estimate of the annual expenditure to prevent the English National Health Service estate's condition from deteriorating, excluding those parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or otherwise disposal; and what is the capital value of National Health Service buildings in England.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Replacement)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the £40 million for the replacement royal Devon and Exeter hospital, Wonford, will be released to the South-West regional health authority; and what decisions or action, and by whom, has to precede that release.

Mrs. Currie: Payment of the Department's contribution of £40 million (1986-87 cash) towards the cost of replacing the royal Devon and Exeter hospital (Wonford) will be phased over a period of eight years commencing in 1988-89 when the main contract is expected to be let. An application from South Western regional health authority for approval in principle to the scheme is currently under discussion. As soon as agreement is reached a formal announcement will be made.

London Postgraduate Health Authorities

Mr. Dorrell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are being taken to enable the London postgraduate special health authorities to improve their process of strategic planning.

Mr. Newton: Our officials will shortly be embarking on a series of special studies with the active co-operation of the special health authorities to see how their planning processes might be improved.

Disabled People

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he now expects sections 5, 6 and 7 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 to come into effect; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: I cannot add to my reply to the hon. Member for Caenarfon (Mr. Wigley) on 10 March at column *157* about implementation of sections 5, 6 and 7 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

Dr. Kevin Browne

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what post with Cape Industries plc was held by Dr. Kevin Browne subsequent to his appointment as medical officer to the Medical Boarding Centre (Respiratory Diseases) in London;

(2) whether Dr. K. Browne is still a part-time medical officer to the Medical Boarding Centre (Respiratory Diseases).

Mr. Major: Dr. Browne is currently employed as a part-time medical officer to the London Medical Boarding Centre (Respiratory Diseases), working approximately half a day every two weeks. He also holds a part-time post as medical adviser to Cape Industries PLC where I understand he works 1½ days a week.

National Health Service (Staff)

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of *(a)* secretarial and *(b)* clerical staff in the north-west region of the National Health Service are women.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 April 1987, c. *107*]: At 30 September 1985 the proportion of all National Health Service secretarial and clerical staff employed in the North Western regional health authority who are female was 95 per cent. It is not possible to separately identify secretarial and clerical staff as requested without incurring disproportionate cost.

ENERGY

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Energy on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department spent the following on press advertising over the period requested:

	National Press £	*Regional/ Local Press* £	*Magazine* £	*Total* £
[1]1986-87	1,045,539	150,000	316,000	1,511,539
1985-86	1,336,671	28,000	103,000	1,467,671
1984-85				1,315,539

[1] Provisional.

Further breakdowns of these figures could only be achieved at disproportionate cost.

Pit Closures

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list by name and area all pits which have closed since 1960.

Mr. David Hunt: The information requested is as follows:

1960
Scottish
Auchincruive Nos. 1, 2 and 3
Balgonie
Balmore
Carberry
Cowdenbeath No. 7
Devon
Greenrigg
Meadowmill
Zetland

North East
Backworth "Maude"
Callerton Drift
Dinnington (Northumberland)
Garesfield
Morwood
Seaton Delaval
South Garesfield
Ushaw Moor

North Yorkshire
—

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
Griff No. 4

Western
Berry Hill
Brereton
Deane
Fence No. 2
Glasshouse
Hawkins
Landgate
Mains
Park (Lancs.)
Reedley
Sandwell Park

South Wales
Britannic
Cannop
Carway
Hendy Merthyr
North Rhondda
Tylorstown No. 9

Kent
—

TOTAL
35

1961
Scottish
Beaton's Lodge
Bellyford
Brucefield
Gilmerton
Harviestown
Northfield
Pennyvenie No. 4
Sundrum Nos. 5 and 6
Whitehill (Midlothian)

North East
Barlow Townley Drift
Broomhill
Hartford
Malton
North Seaton
West Wylam
Westerton Drift

North Yorkshire
—

South Yorkshire
Aldwarke Main

North Derbyshire
Stanley

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
Newtown

Western
Giants Hill
Hoddlesden
Standish Hall
Walkmill
Wheatsheaf

South Wales
Clydach Merthyr
Graig Fawr
Llanbradach
Maritime
Rock (Glamorgan)

Kent
—

TOTAL
29

1962
Scottish
Arniston
Baads
Bardykes
Barony Nos. 1, 2 and 3
Benhar
Blairenbathie
Blantyreferme Nos. 1 and 2
Boglea
Coalburn
Glencairn
Glenochil
Hassockrigg
Knowehead
Plean
Polquhairn Nos. 1, 4, 5 and 6
Prestongrange
Rothes
Westown Mine
Winton

North East
Barmoor
Beamish Second
Bedlington 'E'
Eldon Drift
Esperley Lane Drift
Horton Grange
Randolph (Durham)
Ravensworth Shop
Seghill
Tanfield Lea
Victoria Garesfield
Wingate Grange

North Yorkshire
Grange (Yorkshire)
Howroyd

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
Parkhouse (Derby)

Nottinghamshire
Bevercotes

South Midlands
Bretby

Western
Cannock Chase
Dairy
Moss
Parkhall
Sandhole
Scaitcliffe
Wigan Junction

South Wales
Aberaman
Blaenhirwaun
East
Gelli
Great Mountain Nos. 1 and 2
Llanharan
New Cross Hands
Onllwyn No. 3
Princess Royal

Kent
—

TOTAL
52

1963-64
Scottish
Aitken
Ardenrigg
Auldton
Dumbreck
Gateside and Tower
Kingshill 2
Lady Helen
Pirnhall
Prestonlinks
Thinacres
Woodmuir

North East
Addison
Crookhall
Fenhall Drift
Haggs Lane
Heworth
High Marley Hill Drift
Lanchester Towneley Drift
Loughbridge
Roddymoor
Seaton Burn
South Pelaw
Stargate

North Yorkshire
—

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
Cotes Park

South Midland
Binley

Western
Cleworth Hall
Copy
Gibfield
Grime Bridge
Harrington No. 11
Kemball
Lyme
Mossfield
Robin Hill Drift

South Wales
Bryn
Cwmgwrach
Ffaldydre

Harry Stoke
New Rockwood
Seven Sisters

Kent
—

Total
40

1964-65
Scottish
Bannockburn Mine
Blantyreferme No. 3
Bridgend
Burghlee
Canderside
Dullatur
Glentore
Lindsay (Fife)
Twechar No. 1
Wester Auckbengeich

North East
Derwent
East Tanfield
Hole-in-the-Wall
Lambton 'D'
Pelton
Phoenix Drift
Stanley Burn
Tudhoe Mill Drift
Watergate

North Yorkshire
Lepton Edge

South Yorkshire
Upton

North Derbyshire
'B' Winning
Mapperley

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
Swadlincote

Western
Brackley
Coppice (Cannock Chase)
Fenton
Hamstead
Lea Green
Walsall Wood

South Wales
Cwmgorse
Garth Tonmawr
Nine Mile Point
Norchard Drift
Onllwyn No. 1
Pochin
Rhigos
Varteg
Wern Tawr
Daren

Kent
—

Total
40

1965-66
Scottish
Auchengeich
Avonbraes
Bowhill (Fife)
Cowdenfoot
Fordell
Houldsworth
Nellie
Ramsay
Torry
Whitehill (Ayr)
Woodend

North East
Algernon
Beamish Mary
Bedlington 'F'
Bradley Drift
Choppington 'B'
Clara Vale
Dean & Chapter
Harraton
Isabella
Lumley Sixth
New Shildon
North Tees
Sherburn Hill
Stobswood
West Thornley
Witton

North Yorkshire
Snydale

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
Morton
Shirland

Nottinghamshire
Radford & Wollaton

South Midlands
North Warwick
Stanhope
Summersales

Western
Albert
Clock Face
Ellerbeck
Fir Trees
Foxfield
Hill Top
Llay Main
Nook

South Wales
Aberbeeg South
Felinfran
Fforchaman
Garngoch No. 3
Glyncastle
Northern United
Norton Hill
Park (Glam)
Pwllbach
Wernos

Kent
—

Total
52

1966-67
Scottish
Argyll
Garscube
Glencraig
Kinglassie

Knowetop
Lumphinnans No. XI
Mary
Mauchline
Rig
Woolmet
Wester Auckhengeich

North East
Barcus Close
Choppington 'A'
Chopwell
Deaf Hill
East Walbottle
Greenside
Hauxley
Middridge
Ryhope
Thrislington
Waterhouses
Weetslade

North Yorkshire
Barnsley Main
Grange Ash
New Monckton Nos.. 1, 2 and 6
New Monckton Nos 3 and 4
Old Roundwood
West Riding
Wharncliffe Woodmoor Nos. 1, 2 and 3
Wooley Edge

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
Coppice (Derby)
Ramcroft
Woodside No. 1

Nottinghamshire
Cossall

South Midlands
—

Western
Chanters
Chisnall Hall
Rišehow
St. Helen's

South Wales
Abercrave
Albion
Cambrian
Dillwyn
Duffryn Rhondda
Glenrhondda
Old Mills
Risca

Kent
—

TOTAL
47

1967-68
Scottish
Beoch
Douglas
Gartshore 9/11
Killochan
Knockshinnoch
Lingerwood
Michael
Minto
Overtown
Wellesley

North East
Bedlington 'D'
Bowburn
Brancepath
Brandon Pit House
Byermoor
Chester South Moor
Hamsterley
Handen Hold
Kimblesworth
Newbiggin
North Walbottle
Ravensworth Park
Staindrop Field House
Trimdon Grange
West Auckland

North Yorkshire
East Ardsley
Hartley Bank
Whitwood

South Yorkshire
Handsworth Firbeck

North Derbyshire
Alfreton
Denby

Nottinghamshire
Bestwood

South Midlands
Arley
Haunchwood

Western
Baggeridge
Bedford
Deerplay
Hafod
Huncoat
Madeley Wood
Mid Cannock
Mosley Common

South Wales
Abergorki
Crumlin
Elliot
International (Maesteg)
Newlands
Pontreclwydau
Wyllie
Yniscedwyn

Kent
—

TOTAL
50

1968-69
Scottish
Auchlochan
Auchmaddan Mains
Blair
Fauldhead
Kames
Kingshill 1
Newcraighall
Randolph (Fife)
Riddochill
Roslin

North East
Brusselton
Burnopfield
Cambois

Emma
Esh
Linton
Longhirst
Mainsforth
Pegswood
Stanley Cottage
Washington 'F'
Wheatley Hill
Whitburn

North Yorkshire
Crigglestone
Haigh (Yorkshire)
Middleton Broom
Monk Bretton
Shaw Cross
Waterloo (Yorks)

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
'A' Winning
Holmewood
Swanwick

Nottinghamshire
Clifton (Notts)
Kirkby

South Midlands
Kingsbury
New Lount

Western
Bradford
Harrington No. 10
Highley
Hilton Main
Ifton
Old Meadows
Parkhouse (Staffs)
Ravenhead
Stafford
Thorny Bank

South Wales
Cefn Coed
Cwmcarn
Groesfaen
Llanhilleth
National
New Rock
Pontyffynon
Pellwyngwent

Kent
—

TOTAL
54

1969-70
Scottish
Bank
Blairhall
Easthouses
Glentaggart
Lochhead

North East
Craghead
Harton
Mill
Rising Sun
Thornley
Tudhoe Park

North Yorkshire
Primrose Hill
Wombwell Main

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
Williamthorpe

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
Apedale

South Wales
Avon
Mountain
Waterloo (Mon)

Kent
Chislet

TOTAL
19

1970-71
Scottish
—

North East
—

North Yorkshire
Water Haigh
Wharncliffe Woodmoor Nos. 4 and 5

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
Ormonde

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
Astley Green
Bank Hall

South Wales
Glyncorrwg

Kent
—

TOTAL
6

1971-72
Scottish
—

North East
Bedlington 'A'
Silksworth

North Yorkshire
—

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
Wood

South Wales
—

Kent
—

TOTAL
3

1972-73
Scottish
Kennox
Manor Powis
Whitrigg

North East
Medowsley
Shotton
Washington Glebe

North Yorkshire
Smithy Wood
Thornhill

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
—

South Wales
—

Kent
—

TOTAL
8

1973-74
Scottish
Auchincruive
Dollar
Easton
Lochlea
Maxwell

North East
Bardon Mill
Fenwick
Fishburn
Morrison Busty
Netherton (Northumberland)

North Yorkshire
Gomersal
St. John's (Yorks)
Shuttle Eye

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
Cannock Wood
Gresford
Solway

South Wales
Coed Cae
Kilmersdon

Kent
—

TOTAL
18

1974-75
Scottish
Kingshill 3
Littlemill

North East
Kibblesworth
Nettlesworth
Usworth
Whitworth Park

North Yorkshire
Barley Hall

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
Glapwell
Oxcroft

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
—

South Wales
Ogilvie

Kent
—

TOTAL
10

1975-76
Scottish
Minnivey

North East
Burradon
Langley Park

North Yorkshire
—

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
—

South Wales
Beynon
Glyntillery

Kent
—

TOTAL
5

1976-77
Scottish
Cairnhill

North East
Havannah

North Yorkshire
—

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
—

South Wales
Ammanford

Kent
—

TOTAL
3

1977-78
Scottish
Dalquharran

North East
Dudley

North Yorkshire
—

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
Norton

South Wales
Bargoed
Caerau

Kent
—

TOTAL
5

1978-79
Scottish
Dalkeith
Kinneil/Valleyfield
Pennyvenie

North East
Metal Bridge
Rainton (Adventure)

North Yorkshire
Wentworth Silkstone

South Yorkshire
New Stubbin

North Derbyshire
Langwith

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
—

South Wales
Graig Merthyr

Kent
—

TOTAL
9

1979-80
Scottish
—

North East
Hylton

North Yorkshire
Rockingham
Walton

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
Granville

South Wales
Deep Duffryn

Kent
—

TOTAL
5

1980-81
Scottish
Lady Victoria
Roger

North East
Eccles
Eden
Woodhorn

North Yorkshire
Peckfield

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
Teversal

South Midlands
—

Western
—

South Wales
Blaenavon
Cwmgwili

Kent
—

TOTAL
9

1981-82
Scottish
Bedlay
Kinneil
Polmaise

North East
Blackhall
Houghton

North Yorkshire
Lofthouse
Manor
Newmillerdam

South Yorkshire
Orgreave

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
New Hucknall

South Midlands
Newdigate

Western
—

South Wales
Coegnant
Kent
—

TOTAL
12

1982-83
Scottish
—

North East
Boldon
Marley Hill

North Yorkshire
Park Hill

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottighamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
Hapton Valley
Victoria
West Cannock 5

South Wales
—

Kent
—

TOTAL
6

1983-84
Scottish
Cardowan
Highhouse
Sorn

North East
East Hetton

North Yorkshire
Newmarket Silkstone
Rothwell

South Yorkshire
Elsecar

North Derbyshire
Westthorpe

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
Desford

Western
Cronton

South Wales
Blaengwrach
Britannia
Brynlliw
Tymawr/Lewis Merthyr
Wyndham/Western

Kent
—

North East
Beauspark

TOTAL
15

1984-85
Scottish
—

North Yorkshire
—

South Yorkshire
—

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
—

South Midlands
—

Western
—

South Wales

Kent
—
—

TOTAL
1

1985-86
Scotland
—

North East
Bates
Horden
Herrington
Sacriston
Brenkley

North Yorkshire
Ackton Hall
Emley Moor
Fryston
Glasshoughton
Savile

South Yorkshire
Brookhouse
Cortonwood
Yorkshire Main

North Derbyshire
—

Nottinghamshire
Moorgreen
Pye Hill

South Midlands
—

Western
Bold
Haig
Wolstanton

South Wales
Aberpergwm
Abertillery
Bedwas
Celynen South
Garw
Markham
Penrikyber
St. Johns
Treforgan

Kent
—

TOTAL
27

1986-87
Scottish
Comrie
Polkemmet

North East
Whittle

North Yorkshire
Kinsley Drift
Ledston Luck

South Yorkshire
Cadeby

North Derbyshire
Whitwell

Nottinghamshire
Hucknall/Babbington
Newstead

South Midlands
Birch Coppice
Whitwick/South Leicester

Western
Bersham

South Wales
Cwm
Nantgarw

Kent
Tilmanstone

TOTAL
15

Mining Accidents

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Energy, if he will give figures for the number of fatal accidents which have occured in British coal mines since 1957.

Mr. David Hunt: The information requested is as follows:

Fatalities in the Coal Industry 1957-1987

	Number
1957	391
1958	315
1959	343
1960	316
1961	234
1962	255
1963-64[1]	308
1964-65	181
1965-66	217
1966-67	146
1967-68[2]	130
1968-69	115
1969-70	82
1970-71	92
1971-72	58
1972-73[3]	81
1973-74	60
1974-75	56
1975-76	59

	Number
1976-77	38
1977-78	48
1978-79[2]	72
1979-80	31
1980-81	39
1981-82	34
1982-83	44
1983-84[2]	22
1984-85[3]	12
1985-86	27
1986-87	15

[1] 15 month period

[2] 53 week period

[3] affected by industrial dispute

Source: British Coal Corporation

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and word processing software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Peter Walker: In the financial years 1985-86 and 1986-87 my Department purchased microcomputers from the Apricot Computers PLC range in association with software from Microsoft Ltd. for its word processing requirements. For reasons of commercial confidentiality I am unable to disclose the value of individual contracts.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Energy how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department's expenditure on word processing systems is as follows;

		£
Financial year 1985-86	Actual	40,000
Financial year 1986-87	Actual	56,000
Financial year 1987-88	Forecast	67,000

In addition, my Department is using general purpose microcomputers for data processing as well as word processing. Plans for financial year 1988-89 have not yet been finalised.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desk-top publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department has not purchased any desktop publishing hardware or software.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Energy how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is the projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department has not purchased any desktop publishing hardware or software, but it will keep the possibility under review.

Layfield Inquiry

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) how many of his officials were involved in the preparation and drafting of the Layfield report; and who paid them for their services in that period;

(2) how many of his officials were seconded, and in what capacity, to the Layfield inquiry; and what was their role in assessing *(a)* his Department's evidence and *(b)* the evidence of protestors.

Mr. Goodlad: The conduct of the inquiry and the drafting of the report were solely the responsibility of the inspector. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, other Ministers and the Department had no knowledge of the content of the report before it was submitted by the inspector. Staff were seconded to the inspector in response to his requests for assistance. This is normal practice. The number of permanent departmental staff on secondment varied over the inquiry and report writing period but was typically about a dozen. They reported to the inspector alone and acted under his instructions. The Department met the costs of providing such assistance.

Offshore Licensing

Mr. Powley asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce licence awards under the 10th round of offshore licensing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I have today announced the conditional award of petroleum production licences for 51 blocks in the tenth round of offshore licensing. These lie in the northern North sea, the Rockall trough and the Moray firth area, and in the central and southern North sea.

"The objectives of the round have been met in full: the award of these 51 blocks meets our target for the number of blocks we hoped to be able to award, and ensures continuity in exploration work. The licence awards will provide the potential for development of our oil and gas discoveries in the 1990s to replace existing fields as they become depleted.

The technical quality of the successful applications was higher than ever before. The approach by applicants was, in many cases, innovative, particularly in seeking our new and less obvious locations for possible oil and gas reserves in areas which had previously been licensed but relinquished.

This confirms that oil companies still recognise considerable potential in the mature oil province of the North sea: it also suggests that we are now on the threshold of a second generation of exploration in this area. The seismic and drilling work programmes proposed will in many cases exploit new exploration techniques now available. Those being awarded licences in the tenth round have committed themselves to drilling a higher average number of wells per block than in the very successful ninth round.

I have taken care to ensure that the environment will be protected. When inviting applications last year I made clear that in certain blocks, particularly those close to the coast, there would be drilling restrictions or other special requirements imposed to reflect the sensitivity of the areas for fishing, wildlife and navigation. All applicants for these blocks have been informed of these conditions.

A copy of the list of awards has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses."

Electricity Industry

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has to privatise the electricity industry, including nuclear power stations.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) on 26 March at column *238*.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Farm Incomes

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the average farm income for member states of the EEC for the latest year for which figures are available; and what the comparable figures have been over the previous three years.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The estimated average family farm income for member states of the EC for 1984-85 (provisional) and for the three previous years are shown below:

('000 ECU per farm)

Country	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*[1]
Belgium	21·3	24·2	24·7	23·2
Denmark	7·9	10·3	7·3	14·5
France	11·2	13·9	11·9	12·6
Germany	7·4	10·7	9·1	11·7
Greece	5·8	7·3	6·4	8·0
Netherlands	23·7	25·3	28·0	26·2
Ireland	9·4	10·6	10·6	11·2
Italy	8·1	9·3	10·8	11·5
Luxembourg	17·8	22·3	16·6	18·6
United Kingdom	17·0	20·4	23·3	21·8
EUR 10	9·7	11·8	11·8	12·7

[1] Provisional.

Source: EC Farm Accountancy Data Network.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Jopling: For reasons of confidentiality it is not possible to divulge the value of individual contracts. Contracts for word processing hardware and software were awarded to the following suppliers in the years indicated:

	Years	*Years*	*Years*
Access Data—	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
AES—	1984-85	1986-87	—
Amstrad—	1986-87	—	—
Data Logic—	1986-87	—	—
Intelligent Interfaces—	1986-87	—	—
ITT—	1984-85	—	—
ITT QUME UK —	1986-87	—	—
Nexos—	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Prime—	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87

Mr. Coombs asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Jopling: It is not possible to apportion expenditure between hardware and software. Total expenditure was as follows in the years indicated:

	£
1984-85	95,000
1985-86	53,000
1986-87	513,000

Consultants are reviewing the Ministry's arrangements for office support systems. Until their report has been received in June, considered and decisions taken as regards implementation expenditure for 1987-88 and 1988-89 cannot be forecast.

Mr. Coombs asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list those companies that his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desk top publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Jopling: For reasons of confidentiality it is not possible to divulge the value of individual contracts. I am able to say, however, that since 1984 contracts with a total value of £30,000 were placed in 1986-87, with the following companies:

SAMS Business Centres (2 × Apple Mackintosh)
Rank Xerox (1 × Xerox Documenter)

Mr. Coombs asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desktop publishing hardware and *(b)* desktop publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Jopling: No expenditure was incurred prior to 1986-87 when £30,000 was spent. It is not possible to apportion this between hardware and software. It is expected that the level of expenditure in 1987-88 and 1988-89 will not increase significantly compared with 1986-87.

Agriculture Debate (Ministerial Reply)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will be replying by letter to the points raised by the hon. Member for Tiverton in the debate on agriculture on Thursday 23 April, *Official Report*, column 838-39.

Mr. Gummer: I am writing to my hon. Friend.

Grain

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will state the total amount of grain which is expected to be left in store at the end of July before the addition of the new season's grain; and how many day's supply this represents.

Mr. Gummer: There are likely to be some 1·4 million tonnes of feed quality common wheat and 0·8 million tonnes of barley in intervention stores at 31 July, representing about 85 days' and 51 days' supply respectively to the animal feed sector.

Environment

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to balance the needs of agriculture and the environment.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *565*]: Since 1979, the Government have taken a very wide range of measures in pursuit of their policy to balance the needs of agriculture and the environment.

Among the many initiatives taken by my Ministry, we introduced in 1985 the agricultural improvements scheme which puts particular emphasis on investment in environmentally beneficial works in the countryside.

We have also introduced the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, under part III of which the sale, supply and use of pesticides were brought under statutory control by the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 and pesticide advertising from 1 January 1987.

We have continued to advise and encourage farmers to take reasonable measures to ensure that farm practices do not result in pollution. We have encouraged the adoption of strengthened model byelaws on straw and stubble burning, issued guidelines on housed livestock and the control of odour, and given further publicity to the code of good agricultural practice.

Following the early success with the Broads grazing marshes conservation scheme, I persuaded my European colleagues to support the new concept of environmentally sensitive areas under which farmers are encouraged to pursue farming practices which protect and enhance the conservation value of their land. In addition to the five areas already designated in England, I intend to announce further designations shortly. In collaboration with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, I launched the farm and countryside initiative in February 1986, through which the community programme of the Manpower Services Commission is used to provide work for long-term unemployed people on task of benefit to the rural environment.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what moneys are owed by his Department to the London Residuary Body in respect of Greater London council activities prior to abolition.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987]: I estimate that, in addition to the grant payments already made in respect of the Thames tidal flood defence scheme, a further sum in the region of £6·5 million is likely to become payable when full details of the costs of the scheme have been supplied to my Department.

Butter

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why the Council of Ministers approved the extension of regulation 1341/86 to enable intervention butter to be transferred from Germany to Italy; and if the Council was informed regarding the purpose for which such butter was to be used.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 May 1987]: Regulation 1341/86 which was agreed as part of last year's agricultural price fixing, provides for the transfer of 20,000 tonnes of intervention butter from Germany to Italy. Its purpose is to facilitate the disposal of stocks by enabling Italian consumers and food manufacturers to benefit from measures such as regulations 3143/86 (concentrated butter for cooking) and 262/79 (reduced price butter for food manufacture).

It was originally envisaged that the transfer would be completed by 1 April 1987. But since this did not prove possible in practice the Council agreed to extend the time limit by one year.

CAP (Quotas)

Mr. Jackson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are his reasons for opposing the imposition of quotas on further agricultural commodities within the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 May 1987]: The Government do not favour the introduction of quotas. They tend to rigidify production patterns and inhibit enterprise. Unlike action on prices, quotas provide no benefit to consumers. Because of our farm structure, with average farms five times the EC average, quotas are also likely to disadvantage the United Kingdom.

Cereals Land Diversion Scheme

Mr. Jackson asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are his reasons for favouring a cereals land diversion scheme which is voluntary rather than compulsory.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 May 1987]: I have put forward the idea of a voluntary land diversion scheme because such a scheme, if coupled with a prudent price policy, would provide an alternative to those producers farming land least suited to cereals and least able to cope with lower prices, and so directly encourage them to take land out of cereals production, but would not discourage the most efficient producers of cereals farming land well suited to that purpose—many of whom are to be found in the United Kingdom.

SCOTLAND

Drugs

5. **Mrs. McCurley** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the drugs education programme in Scottish schools.

Mr. John MacKay: Our drugs education programme aims to discourage drug misuse through the promotion of healthy lifestyles. We have provided for courses for teachers and for the preparation of teaching materials for pupils.

Valleyfield Site, Penicuik

11. **Mr. Eadie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has had a planning appeal amendment submitted to him to reschedule the Valleyfield site in Penicuik for housing purposes.

Mr. Ancram: No.

Community Charge

12. **Sir Hector Monro** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss community charges.

Mr. Rifkind: I am looking forward to having my next regular meeting with the Convention on 3 July. My officials stand ready to discuss community charges with them at any time.

New Towns (Employment)

13. **Mr. Norman Hogg** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many jobs have been lost, and how many created, since June 1979 in each of the new towns in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The available information on jobs created and lost in each of the new towns since 1979 is given in the table which will be published in the *Official Report*.

	Jobs created 1979-1987	*Jobs lost 1979-1987*
Cumbernauld	5,378	7,653
East Kilbride	8,965	12,508
Glenrothes[1]	6,560	7,852
Irvine	6,522	9,190
Livingston	9,086	6,675

[1] Figures for 1979-86.

The figures are estimates provided by the new town development corporations relating to jobs created and lost on industrial estates in the manufacturing, service, office and distribution sectors and covering the period April 1979 to March 1987.

Greater Glasgow Health Board

14. **Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet the Greater Glasgow health board to discuss the provision of speech therapists and other matters.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to meet the Greater Glasgow health board in the near future, but he notes that the speech therapists employed by the board have increased by over 26 per cent. since 1979.

European Regional Development Fund

15. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total value of grants which Scotland has received from the European regional development fund in each of the past three years.

Mr. Lang: Scotland has received grant commitment from the European regional development fund of £103 million in 1984; £69 million in 1985; and £84 million in 1986.

Labour Statistics

16. **Sir Alex Fletcher** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will indicate the growth and trends of employment and self-employment in Scotland since 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: In June 1983 seasonally adjusted adult unemployment in Scotland, based on the current coverage of the claimant count, was 308,500 compared with 344,600 in March 1987. In the latest two months, however, there has been a fall of over 5,000. Self-employment in Scotland is estimated to have been 205,000 in June 1986; an increase of 26,000 or 14·5 per cent. on the June 1983 figure.

The recent fall in unemployment together with the recent results of Scottish business surveys are welcome evidence of better economic performance in Scotland this year. The growth in self-employment is also a step in the right direction although we still have a long way to go in developing a culture and environment which adequately stimulates and rewards business enterprise.

20. **Mr. David Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the seasonally adjusted unemployment figures for Scotland as at *(a)* May 1979 and *(b)* the latest available date, compiled on the same basis; and to what factors he attributes the difference.

Mr. Lang: On a comparable basis, seasonally adjusted unemployment in Scotland was 150,400 in May 1979 and 344,600 in March 1987. Much of the increase in Scottish unemployment took place in the 1979-81 period, and reflected both the effects of the worst world recession since the 1930s and the high level of sterling brought about by the United Kingdom's new found status as a major oil producer. In 1979 we inherited a situation in which overmanning in British industry was chronic and hidden unemployment considerable.

24. **Mr. Allan Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the latest available figures for employment and unemployment in the Eastwood constituency; and if he will make a statment.

Mr. Lang: Information on employment is not available for parliamentary constituencies. In March 1987 there were 3,348 people unemployed in the Eastwood parliamentary constituency. Employment prospects in the Eastwood constituency, as elsewhere, are likely to benefit from the growth in output now under way in the Scottish economy.

31. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the current unemployment situation in Scotland, with particular reference to youth unemployment.

Mr. Lang: While the level of unemployment in Scotland still gives cause for concern, it is encouraging to see that there has been a decrease of over 16,000 in the number of unemployed claimants over the past 2 months.

Youth unemployment is now falling and the extension of the YTS guarantee to include all school leavers under 18, the introduction last year of the New Workers Scheme and, more recently the new Job Training Scheme, will all further increase the opportunities available to unemployed young people in Scotland.

34. **Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Manpower Services Commission about the level of unemployment in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and I met the chairman of the Manpower Services Commission most recently on 4 March when we discussed the range of employment and training measures being undertaken by the Manpower Services Commission to reduce the level of unemployment in Scotland.

Manufacturing Industry

17. **Mr. Henderson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the current performance of Scottish manufacturing industry, with particular regard to jobs, productivity, profitability and exports.

Mr. Lang: Scottish manufacturing industry has undergone a major transition in recent years. A stronger core of companies and sectors has emerged from the recession of the early 1980s which are able to compete more effectively with companies from other parts of the United Kingdom and from abroad. The rate of growth of manufacturing productivity has been considerably faster in Scotland than in the United Kingdom in most years since 1979. Recent evidence from the CBI "Industrial Trends Survey" suggests that export markets are more buoyant than they have been for some time, with the upward trend likely to continue and that the rate of job loss also appears to have been moderating.

37. **Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the latest estimate of how many manufacturing jobs have been lost since June 1979.

Mr. Lang: On a seasonally adjusted basis, the number of employees in employment in manufacturing in Scotland is provisionally estimated to have fallen by 192,000 between June 1979 and December 1986.

British Steel Corporation

18. **Mr. George Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he intends to meet the chairman of the British Steel Corporation regarding the future of the Ravenscraig steel works and the Dalziel slate mine.

Mr. Lang: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Mr. Hamilton) earlier today.

Peterhead Prison

19. **Mr. Hugh Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received the report from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons of his inquiry into incidents in Peterhead prison announced on 17 November 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to my reply given on 6 May 1987 to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie).

National Farmers Union

21. **Mr. Pollock** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what subjects were discussed when he last met representatives of the Scottish National Farmers Union; and if he will make a statement.

38. **Mr. Bill Walker** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the president of the National Farmers Union of Scotland; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. and learned Friend and I attended the union's annual dinner on 12 March. I delivered the keynote address to the annual general meeting the following day and had further detailed discussions with the union's leadership and members. A wide range of agricultural matters was covered on both occasions.

"Count Me In" Scheme

22. **Mr. Fairbairn** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what support the Scottish Office is proposing to give to Edinburgh's "Count Me In" scheme.

Mr. Rifkind: This is a local promotional initiative led by the Edinburgh business community. There are no plans for direct Scottish Office support, but my officials stand ready to offer any advice or guidance which may be sought. I wish the venture every success.

Homelessness

23. **Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will institute an inquiry into the numbers of homeless young people in Edinburgh.

Mr. Ancram: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans for such an inquiry.

School Closures

25. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the current criteria and practice relating to the closure of schools in the rural areas of Scotland.

Mr. John MacKay: Since 1981, most closures have been decided locally by education authorities, subject to statutory requirements to consult with parents and other local interests. Proposed closures of primary schools where the receiving school is five or more miles from the school to be closed and of secondary schools where the receiving school is 10 or more miles away require the approval of the Secretary of State. Each such case is considered in the light of all the local circumstances.

Scottish Development Agency

26. **Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chairman of the Scottish Development Agency to discuss measures to alleviate unemployment.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend and I met the chairman and board of the agency on Friday 20 February 1987 to discuss a number of matters including the agency's role in improving employment opportunities in Scotland.

Manufacturing Industry

27. **Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has for reducing unemployment and creating jobs in the manufacturing sector in Glasgow.

Mr. Lang: The best prospect for creating jobs in the manufacturing sector in Glasgow, as elsewhere, lies in continuing to improve industry's competitive position. Manufacturing companies in Glasgow, which is designated as a Development area, are eligible for a wide range of assistance under various schemes and initiatives. In particular, companies are eligible for assistance towards investment projects which create or safeguard jobs under regional selective assistance and the new regional development grants scheme. In the financial year 1986-7 £2·2 million was offered under regional selective assistance towards manufacturing projects undertaken by companies based in Glasgow, and £15·8 million under the new regional development grants scheme. These offers were associated with 400 and 4,440 jobs respectively, but it should be noted that some projects receive awards of both RSA and RDG.

In addition to direct assistance towards manufacturing industry, Glasgow benefits from the full range of the Government's employment and training measures, and also from the activities of the Scottish Development Agency.

Green Pound

28. **Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the implications for agriculture in Scotland of the current progress of discussions on a devaluation of the green pound.

Mr. John MacKay: The current level of green pound places Scottish producers at a disadvantage relative to those in some other member states. My right hon. and learned Friend and I are well aware, from our frequent discussions with farmers and their leaders, that this is a major area of concern, particularly for the beef sector.

Accordingly the Government are of the view that the 4 per cent. devaluation proposed by the European Commission as part of this year's CAP price-fixing proposals is not enough and we shall in the negotiations be aiming to improve on this figure. Our objective will be to secure a higher devaluation than, for example, France and Ireland whose monetary compensation amounts are already less than those for the United Kingdom.

Job Creation

29. **Sir Russell Johnston** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate he has prepared of reductions in unemployment in Scotland over the next two years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: It has not been the practice of this or previous Administrations to forecast unemployment. Scottish unemployment fell substantially in February and March of this year. With the prospects for Scottish output, particularly manufacturing, better this year than last, employment prospects are now more favourable.

Rating System

30. **Mr. Douglas** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from the electorate indicating its support for his proposals to reform the rating system in Scotland.

Mr. Ancram: Most of the representations on rating reform received since the publication of the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714) have included comments in favour of some of the detailed proposals and against others.

"Glasgow Herald" and "The Scotsman"

32. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many copies of the *Glasgow Herald* and *The Scotsman* were taken at *(a)* New St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh and *(b)* Dover House, London on Wednesday 28 January 1986.

Mr. Ancram: On Wednesday 28 January 1987 in New St. Andrew's House there were 30 copies of *The Scotsman* and 27 of the *Glasgow Herald*; at Dover House there were 12 and 10 respectively.

Hospital Closures

33. **Mr. Kennedy** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is satisfied with the consultation procedures used by health boards proposing to close or change the use of a hospital.

Mr. John MacKay: Yes.

Hunterston and Ardrossan

35. **Mr. Lambie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has made any arrangements to meet the chairman of Clydeport to discuss the future of the ports of Hunterston and Ardrossan.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has no current plans to meet the chairman of the Clyde Port Authority.

Dundee Waterfront Project

36. **Mr. Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what additional funding will be made available for the Dundee waterfront project.

Mr. Lang: The major part of expenditure on the Dundee waterfront project will be met by the private sector developers concerned. Public sector contributions will be met from within existing allocations and approvals, which I consider adequate for this purpose.

Management Consultancy

Mr. Mates asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the contracts, with the subject of the assignment, awarded to management consultancy or accounting firms by his Department in 1986, with the names of the consultants concerned.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on 19 February 1987, at column *615*.

Great Springburn Enterprises Ltd.

Mr. Martin asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what public funds have been spent on Great Springburn Enterprises Ltd. since 1 April; and if he will make a statement regarding the company's future.

Mr. Ancram: Urban programme funding of Greater Springburn Enterprises Ltd. was withdrawn by Glasgow district council on 3 April 1987 following reviews of the company by the district council and Strathclyde Community Business Ltd. I understand that the company has now appointed a liquidator.

Young Offenders

Mr. McTaggart asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what arrangements have been made to house offenders under the age of 21 years following the transfer of prisoners from Barlinnie prison in Glasgow to Glenochil young offenders' institute and other young offenders' institutions.

Mr. Lang: I refer to my reply of 12 May to my hon. Friend the Member for Moray (Mr. Pollock).

In order to reduce pressure of overcrowding at Barlinnie prison and other local prisons, Noranside young offenders institution was converted to use as an adult open prison on 13 April and two halls of Glenochil young offenders institution have been used for adult prisoners since 4 March and 6 April, respectively. A group of 40 inmates from Glenochil young offenders institution who had been presenting management problems were transferred to B hall, Dumfries prison, on 15 April, where they are being kept out of association with adult inmates.

Plans to complete the transfer of remaining under-21 inmates in Glenochil YOI to Dumfries prison and Greenock prison are now being drawn up (together with plans for transfer of adult inmates from Dumfries and Greenock prisons to other adult establishments). Castle Huntly is continuing to operate as an open young offenders institution and Polmont young offenders institution will continue to house young offenders suitable for conditions of medium security.

Expenditure

Mr. Maxton asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure within his responsibility for the years 1978-79 to 1987-88, inclusive, in a form similar to the table on page 151 of "Public Expenditure to 1989-90: Scottish Commentary", expressing this information at estimated 1987-88 prices.

Mr. Rifkind: The information is set out in the table.

Expenditure within the Secretary of State's responsibility in real terms (1987-88 base year)[1]

£ million

	1978-79	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	[2]*1987-88*
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	160	209	224	200	187	193	205	216	196	186
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	170	173	176	166	195	189	230	310	357	257
Other services:										
Tourism	12	12	12	12	14	13	15	14	13	13
Transport	608	560	567	596	595	584	570	574	604	601
Housing	1,172	1,269	1,138	953	850	849	745	664	661	696
Other Environmental Services	630	681	643	620	615	616	601	586	641	610
Law, Order and Protective Services	392	423	447	475	494	529	551	543	587	625
Education	1,970	1,960	2,020	2,064	2,024	2,032	1,990	1,901	2,032	1,956
Arts and Libraries	69	64	80	82	78	76	78	81	83	82
Health and Social Work	2,073	2,131	2,270	2,347	2,364	2,411	2,477	2,473	2,556	2,605
Other Public Services	109	104	108	106	96	114	114	112	116	118
Local Authority Current Expenditure not allocated to services	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	124
Total Other Services	7,036	7,244	7,284	7,255	7,132	7,225	7,141	6,948	7,295	7,430
Nationalised Industries External Financing	133	244	159	126	197	328	427	249	250	87
Total Expenditure within the Secretary of State's responsibility	7,498	7,868	7,844	7,747	7,711	7,936	8,003	7,723	8,099	7,960

[1] The figures are the cash figures taken from the 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987 editions of "Public Expenditure: A Commentary on The Scotland Programme" adjusted for general inflation as measured by the GDP deflator at market prices.

[2] The figures for 1987-88 are planned provision. Those for 1986-87 are based on provisional outturn figures, and those for earlier years are based on actual outturn.

Note: The individual figures for services may not sum to the totals due to roundings.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Scotland on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Rifkind: The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost to my Department.

Forestry Grant Scheme Applications

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 29 April, *Official Report*, column 147, how many forestry grant scheme applications made up the 49,895 hectares of land referred to; and what proportion of these contained land in LCA class 4.

Mr. John MacKay: A total of 315 forestry grant scheme applications was involved. I regret that identification of the quality of land involved could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Rifkind: Contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software have been awarded to the following companies:

Year and Company

1984-85
IBM (UK) Ltd.
Information Technology Ltd.

1985-86
IBM (UK) Ltd.
Olivetti
AES Data
Wordplex

1986-87
IBM (UK) Ltd.
Computerland
Microcentre
City Business Computers
MBS Computer Services
ICL
Wordplex

The total value of contracts awarded was £1,519,860.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Rifkind: My Department has spent the following sums on word processing hardware and software since 1984:

Year	*Cost* £
(a) Word processing Hardware	
1984-85	494,725
1985-86	320,776
1986-87	595,035
(b) Word Processing Software	
1984-85	27,347
1985-86	35,337
1986-87	46,240

Expenditure is projected for 1987-88 and 1988-89 as follows:

	Hardware £	*Software* £
1987-88	200,436	16,584
1988-89	29,951	28,914

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desk top publishing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Rifkind: Contracts for the supply of desk top publishing hardware and software have been awarded to Rank Xerox in each of the years 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87 to a total value of £99,000.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desk top publishing hardware and *(b)* desk top publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Rifkind: My Deprtment has spent the following sums on desk top publishing hardware and software since 1984:

Year	*Cost* £
(a) Desk top publishing hardware	
1984-85	59,167
1985-86	17,168
1986-87	17,782
(b) Desk top publishing software	
1984-85	890
1985-86	1,780
1986-87	748

Projected expenditure for the financial year 1987-88 is nil and for 1988-89 is £20,000.

Speed Restrictions

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many applications to impose speed restrictions have been submitted by Highland regional council over the past 15 months; how many of those applications have been rejected; and what have been the precise reasons for his Department having rejected each application.

Mr. Ancram: Nine applications have been received, of which two have been approved, five rejected and two are still being considered. Applications in respect of Bettyhill, Carrbridge, Dunnet, Kinlochewe and Thurso were rejected as the environmental criteria were not met. In addition the accident criteria were not met for Bettyhill, Carrbridge, Kinlochewe and Thurso, and the minimum length of road criteria for Dunnet, Kinlochewe and Thurso.

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will give consideration to the introduction of different criteria for the imposition of speed restrictions in urban and rural areas to take account of the differing traffic patterns in the two types of area.

Mr. Ancram: The speed limit criteria and the guidelines set out in Scottish Development Department circular No. 18/80 are already sufficiently flexible to take account of the circumstances in each type of area.

Crime (Clear-up Rates)

Mr. Kaufman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish, for 1978 and 1986, for each police force area in Scotland *(a)* the overall crime clear-up rates and *(b)* clear-up rates for (i) violence against the person, (ii) burglary, (iii) theft, (iv) fraud/forgery and (v) criminal damage.

Mr. Lang: The table sets out the requested figures on crime recorded as a percentage of those cleared up, using the best available approximations in the Scottish crime classification to the categories listed in the question.

DEFECTIVE

Clear up rates by Police Force Area, Scotland 1979

Crime	*Central*	*Dumfries and Galloway*	*Fife*	*Grampian*	*Lothian and Borders*	*Northern*	*Strathclyde*	*Tayside*
Total Crimes	37·6	40·4	43·4	37·4	29·3	60·7	25·6	35·0
Violence against the Person	85·3	90·9	88·1	86·6	70·8	90·7	65·9	83·5
Burglary	30·2	26·9	33·0	25·6	17·6	41·8	18·2	22·5
Theft	38·0	38·6	39·7	33·9	25·6	56·5	23·2	31·5
Fraud and Forgery	75·5	90·1	90·8	70·2	79·4	95·6	75·8	79·1
Criminal Damage	26·3	25·2	34·2	27·8	20·4	52·5	15·5	23·5

Clear up rates by Police Force Area, Scotland 1986

Crime	*Central*	*Dumfries and Galloway*	*Fife*	*Grampian*	*Lothian and Borders*	*Northern*	*Strathclyde*	*Tayside*
Total Crimes	47·6	34·3	41·5	31·3	30·2	62·4	28·4	41·0
Violence against the Person	94·2	91·6	91·8	82·1	80·4	99·0	74·3	88·4
Burglary	33·0	46·0	29·0	15·8	17·9	38·4	15·8	24·0
Theft	43·9	47·8	35·0	26·5	28·7	51·7	23·8	36·9
Fraud and Forgery	87·7	89·3	81·1	72·4	78·4	94·2	66·1	87·6
Criminal Damage	34·9	38·5	28·4	21·4	24·4	53·3	17·7	23·3

Notes:

The categories listed above have been derived from the categories of the Scottish crime classification as follows:

"Violence against the person": all non-sexual crimes of violence (Group 1 of the standard classification) apart from robbery, those crimes of indecency (Group 2) which contain a violent element, and certain crimes involving malicious and reckless conduct.

"Burglary": housebreaking.

"Theft": opening lockfast places and clandestine removal in addition to theft per se.

"Fraud and Forgery": fraud, forgery and uttering, bankruptcy and currency offences.

"Criminal Damage": fire-raising, vandalism and other crimes of malicious and reckless conduct not involving violence against the person.

NHS Estate

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the annual expenditure, in 1987 prices, from 1975-76 to date on repair, maintenance and improvement work on the Scottish National Health Service estate; what is his Department's estimate of the expenditure needed to bring the condition of the Scottish National Health Service estate to a fully reconditioned and repaired state, complying with up-to-date building standards, not including the reconditioning of parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or disposal, or the expected depreciation of the estate in this financial year; what is his Department's estimate of the annual expenditure to prevent the Scottish National Health Service estate's condition from deteriorating, excluding those parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or otherwise disposal; and what is the capital value of National Health Service buildings in Scotland.

Mr. John MacKay: The table shows expenditure on repair, maintenance and upgrading of the NHS estate in Scotland at 1986-87 prices for the years 1978-79 to 1985-86. Because of changes in the format of health board annual accounts, comparable figures are not available for earlier years.

Financial years	*£ million at 1986-87 prices*
1978-79	98·8
1979-80	84·5
1980-81	76·9
1981-82	93·9
1982-83	88·7
1983-84	93·4
1984-85	109·7
1985-86	116·2
1986-87	Not yet available

A survey into the physical condition of the NHS estate in Scotland, conducted in 1981, estimated that £205 million was then required over a 10-year period to raise the condition of the estate to an acceptable standard. As a result of the Scottish Home and Health Department introduced in 1983-84 a special allocation to health boards specifically for backlog maintenance work. The sums thus allocated since 1983-84 are included in the figures in the table. A further survey of the physical condition of the estate is now in progress.

As regards the value of NHS buildings in Scotland, I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 6 February 1987 at column *711*.

A1 (Tower-Dunglass)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he is yet in a position to determine the length of time necessary to deal with the objections which have been lodged to the revised trunk road orders on the A1 Tower to Dunglass diversion.

Mr. Ancram: Ninety-seven objections have been received to the draft trunk road orders and are being considered. I cannot estimate how long they will take to resolve. It may be necessary to hold a public local inquiry later this year.

RINTING

Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd. (Investment Proposals)

Mr. Corrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will reach a view on the investment proposals submitted to him by the Scottish Transport Group for a new ferry for its subsidiary Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd.; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: My right hon. and learned Friend has today approved a recommendation from the Scottish Transport Group that it should be allowed to commission a new 60-car ferry for operation on its Oban-Barra/Lochboisdale and Oban-Coll/Tiree services. Caledonian MacBrayne will now be able to invite competitive tenders for the new vessel.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 14 May 1987

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

St. Helena (Pianos)

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many pianos in reasonably good playable condition are available to the education service on St. Helena; and in which schools they are placed.

Mr. Chris Patten: Eight pianos in good condition, including six electronic ones, are in the following schools:

Country Senior
Pilling Senior
Secondary Selective
Longwood Junior
Jamestown Junior
Half Tree Hollow
Sandy Bay
Country Junior

"Britain and Africa's Development"

Dr. Owen asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much it cost to produce the booklet "Britain and Africa's Development"; how many copies have been printed; and at what cost.

Mr. Chris Patten: Eight hundred copies of my address "Britain and Africa's Development" to the Royal Commonwealth Society were reproduced in the Overseas Development Administration at a total cost of £208·34.

"British Aid"

Dr. Owen asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much it cost to produce the booklet "British Aid" by the Overseas Development Administration; how many copies have been printed; and at what cost.

Mr. Chris Patten: It cost £20,760 to produce 30,000 copies of the booklet "British Aid".

HOME DEPARTMENT

Naturalisation

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the changes in the fee charged for naturalisation of an alien since 1975 indicating what proportion of the costs of the scheme were intended to be borne by the changes at each stage at which they were increased.

Mr. Hurd: The changes in the fee charged for naturalisation since 1975 are as follows:

Naturalisation Fees: Changes

Date	*£*
April 1975	40
October 1976	70
March 1978	85
April 1979	90
April 1980	150
April 1982	200
April 1984	160
April 1986	170

A separate fee of £70 was charged for the naturalisation of the spouse of a British citizen from January 1983. The changes in this fee since then were as follows:

Naturalisation Fees: Spouse of British Citizen

Date	*£*
April 1984	55
April 1986	60

In the years up to 1980 the fees charged were forecast to recover about 50 per cent. of the costs of dealing with the application. From 1982, fee levels have been set to recover the full cost of processing successful applications.

Immigration

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visas have been issued in *(a)* Ghana, *(b)* Bangladesh, *(c)* India, *(d)* Pakistan and *(e)* Nigeria since the scheme began; and how many of these were issued without an interview.

Mr. Hurd: The information available centrally, which does not include separate figures on those visas granted without interview, is given in the following table:

Applications granted for visas to the United Kingdom[1]

	Number of persons
Ghana	
1986 October[2] to December	2,890
1987 January, February	1,260
Bangladesh	
1986 October[3] to December	2,920
1987 January to March	2,610
India	
1986 October[3] to December	20,130
1987 January to March	16,570
Pakistan	
1986 October[3] to December	11,540
1987 January to March	10,530
Nigeria	
1987 February	[4]2,600

[1] For settlement or temporary purposes.

[2] Including applications granted for entry clearance in the period 1 to 22 October 1986.

[3] Including applications granted for entry clearance in the period 1 to 14 October 1986.

[4] Provisional figure.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a breakdown of the immigration status on arrival in the United Kingdom of all those *(a)* granted refugee status on asylum and *(b)* refused it over the latest 12-month period.

Mr. Hurd: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my right hon. and learned Friend gave to a question from my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on 16 March, at column *360*. The hon. Member may like to know that the annual statistical bulletin on refugee statistics for the calendar year 1986 is being published on 19 May.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* visitors and *(b)* business visitors were admitted to the United Kingdom from (i) India, (ii) Bangladesh, (iii) Pakistan, (iv) Ghana and (v) Nigeria in each month since October 1986.

Mr. Hurd: The latest available information is given in the following table:

Ordinary visitors and business visitors admitted to the United Kingdom between October 1986 and January 1987

Number

Nationality	*October 1986*		*November 1986*		*December 1986*		*January 1987*	
	Ordinary visitors	*Business visitors*	*Ordinary visitors*	*Business visitors*	*Ordinary visitors*	*Business visitors*	*Ordinary visitors*	*Business visitors*
Bangladesh	850	170	500	150	510	110	400	90
Ghana	1,290	570	810	570	970	370	680	460
India	8,520	2,780	5,450	2,490	4,730	1,480	3,730	1,950
Nigeria	5,670	3,330	3,480	2,820	4,400	1,820	3,500	1,850
Pakistan	4,340	1,050	2,610	930	3,090	690	2,130	780

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many (i) visitors and (ii) business visitors *(a)* applied for visas, *(b)* were granted visas, *(c)* were refused visas and *(d)* had their applications referred for further consideration at each of the British posts in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Ghana for each month since October 1986.

Mr. Hurd: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on 22 April 1987 at columns *521-29*. Separate information for ordinary visitors and business visitors is not available. The other information requested which is available centrally is given in the following table.

Applications for a visit visa to the United Kingdom

Number of persons

	Applications			
	[1]*Newly received*	[2]*Granted*	*Refused initially*	[3]*Deferred*
Dhaka				
1987 March	680	490	160	30
Bombay				
1987 March	3,080	2,830	50	20
New Delhi				
1987 March	2,730	2,230	210	60
Calcutta				
1986 October[4]	500	500	+	10
November	350	340	+	+
December	260	250	—	10
1987 January	270	270	+	—
February	290	280	+	20
March	480	470	+	10
Madras				
1986 October[4]	590	580	+	10
November	450	420	10	10
December	320	290	10	+
1987 January	310	300	+	+
February	420	380	10	+
March	850	810	20	—
Islamabad				
1987 March	2,650	1,980	250	190
Karachi				
1987 March	1,870	1,700	180	40
Kaduna				
1987 March	1,780	1,600	40	..
Accra				
1987 February	880	580	220	..

.. Not available. + 5 or fewer.

[1] Including applications subsequently withdrawn.

[2] Including applications granted on appeal.

[3] Including applications referred to the Home Office for decision.

[4] Including applications for entry clearance in the period 1 to 14 October 1986.

Crime Prevention

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent on crime prevention by each police authority for each year from 1979 to 1986; and what these amounts represent as a proportion of each police authority's expenditure.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Police (Hours of Work)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average number of hours worked each week by police officers for each police authority; and what is the average number of hours overtime worked each week by police officers for each police authority.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Federated ranks in the police service are required to work eight hours per day with two rest days in seven. Information on the number of hours worked by police officers and the number of hours overtime worked by police officers is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Police Officers

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers were employed in the United Kingdom in each year from 1979 to the most recent year for which figures are available; and what estimate he has of the number currently employed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is as follows:

Police officer strength: United Kingdom

Position on 31 December	*Numbers*
1979	133,165
1980	137,619
1981	140,103
1982	141,881
1983	142,214
1984	141,925
1985	142,265
1986	143,212
31 March 1987	143,908

Community Police Officers

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many designated community police officers are employed by each police authority; and what proportion of the total number of police officers this represents in each police force.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I regret that this information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Overseas Voters

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) to which branches of the organisation known as Conservatives Abroad overseas registration documents have been supplied;

(2) by whom the review of the need for guidance on the distribution methods of overseas electors' declaration forms referred to in his answer to the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West on 22 April, *Official Report*, column *531*, is being carried out.

Mr. Douglas Hogg [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *548*]: I regret that my original reply was incomplete. The full reply is as follows.

Overseas electors' declaration forms were distributed widely by our diplomatic missions. Information is not available centrally on all the bodies which received copies of the forms, but in practice missions would have supplied copies to anybody, including a branch of Conservatives Abroad, which requested them.

The need for guidance on the methods of distribution was considered jointly by this Department and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office issued guidance on 5 May on the lines indicated in my answer of 22 April at column *531*.

Italian Nationals

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to seek further information from Italian police regarding members of an organisation responsible for bombings in Bologna who are resident in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 February 1987, c. *36*]: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Civil Actions (Northern Ireland)

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Attorney-General why it is intended to abolish the right to trial by jury in civil action cases in Northern Ireland; what representations he has received from the Northern Ireland Bar, and elsewhere, for and against such abolition; when he proposes to proceed with the requisite regulations under the Judicature Act 1978; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: In January this year it was announced that the Lord Chancellor had concluded that there was no compelling reason why Northern Ireland should differ from England and Wales in the use of juries in personal injury actions. This decision was reached at the conclusion of a review during which submissions from known interested parties, including the Northern Ireland Bar, were considered. The Lord Chancellor indicated that he proposed to bring forward legislation to give effect to this decision and a draft order (The Jury Trial (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1987) was laid in the House on 11 May 1987. As a result of the curtailment of the parliamentary timetable the order will not be reached before the dissolution of this Parliament.

Lord Rothschild

Mr. Dalyell asked the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the interim report from the Metropolitan police on Lord Rothschild.

The Attorney-General: I have discussed the case with the Director of Public Prosecutions. He is considering the interim report and may need to request the police to make certain further inquiries.

PRIME MINISTER

Scottish Development Agency

Q120. **Dr. Godman** asked the Prime Minister what conclusion she has drawn from the recent performance of the Scottish Development Agency as to the appropirate role of the state in the Scottish economy; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Since 1979 the Scottish Development Agency has become widely accepted as one of the most effective development agencies in Europe. The agency is committed to working with the grain of the market, encouraging entrepreneurship and private sector initiatives. This approach to economic development is fully in line with the Government's philosophy, and it will continue ot offer substantial benefits for Scotland. The work of the agency was commended by the review carried out and published last year. A copy of the report was placed in the Library.

Engagements

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minster if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 May.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Public Expenditure

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton asked the Prime Minister if she will publish a table or tables listing the identifiable public expenditure per capita for *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Northern Ireland and *(d)* Wales, for each of the last years for which figures are available, giving a separate breakdown for housing, health, eduction, social services, tourism, transport, roads, industrial support, local government, special employment measures, fire and emergency services, police and prisons.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South (Mr. MacGregor) to my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) on 16 December 1986, at columns 488-498. More detailed figures are not readily available. Figures for local authority expenditure in Great Britain by territory were published in table 4.1 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 56, volume II).

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Development Grant

Mr. John Smith asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the expenditure on regional development grant in each region of England Scotland and Wales for each year from 1978-79 to 1986-87; and what expenditure is planned on regional development grants in each of the regions of England, Scotland and Wales in each of the years from 1987-88 to 1989-90.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Payments of grant from 1978-79 to 1986-87 were as follows:

(£ Million)

Area	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	[1]*1986-87*
North East	123·0	107·0	101·1	109·7	91·4	68·8	61·6	46·4	89·8
North West	76·5	74·1	122·2	177·5	133·1	115·5	107·4	83·0	113·7
Yorkshire & Humberside	30·2	21·5	38·7	47·1	36·4	23·5	26·8	24·2	27·2
East Midlands	2·3	2·4	3·2	7·2	8·8	8·2	3·8	4·4	8·4
West Midlands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South West	6·0	5·0	8·5	10·3	11·0	7·8	9·5	8·6	14·6
Scotland	107·3	70·2	133·3	142·7	287·3	143·0	109·2	107·5	170·0
Wales	71·5	50·7	103·5	122·2	121·5	72·1	92·7	84·4	88·9
Great Britain Total	416·8	330·9	490·5	616·7	689·5	438·9	411·0	358·5	512·6

[1]Figures for 1986-87 are provisional.

Provision for expenditure on regional development grants for financial years 1987-88 to 1989-90, as set out in the Supply Estimates for 1987-88 and as incorporated in the public expenditure White Paper for later years, is as follows[1]:

£ millions

	1987-88	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
England[2]	105·0	90·0	100·0
Scotland	67·0	57·0	65·0
Wales	32·0	26·7	27·3
Great Britain Total	204·0	173·7	192·3

[1] The figures for future years are net of recoveries but gross of European Community receipts. The figures for past years are for gross payments made.

[2] Estimates for future expenditure are produced only for England as a whole and are not broken down by region.

The projected fall in expenditure between 1986-87 and 1987-88 is the result of the Government's 1984 decision to replace the old RDG scheme, which supported capital investment without reference to employment, by a new and more cost-effective scheme linked to the creation of jobs.

ENVIRONMENT

Community Charge

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the likely level of the community charge in the London borough of Wandsworth; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: If the new system had been introduced in full in 1986-87, the community chage in respect of Wandsworth borough council's own services would have been £59. There would have been an additional £27 for miscellaneous services, including the Metropolitan police, and £311 for expenditure by the Inner London education authority. The total community charge would have been £397. All these figures are inevitably highly speculative. By the time the community charge is introduced in 1990-91 each authority may spend more—or less—than it did in 1986-87. There will be plenty of scope for ILEA in particular to reduce its expenditure before 1990. If, in 1986-87, it had spent at the Government's assessment of its need to spend, instead of what it actually spent, ILEA's community charge would have been only £65, and the total community charge in Wandsworth only £157.

Council House Sales

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many *a)* council houses and *(b)* council flats have been sold by each local authority in each year from 1981 to 1986.

Mr. Tracey: A table showing the available information for financial years will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mr. A. Jamieson of his council home at 8 Spring Hill Close, Champion Hill, London SE5;

(2) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mr. and Mrs. Wellbrook of their council house at 11 Sunray Avenue, London, SE24;

(3) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mrs. H. Maher of her council home at 11 Priory Court, Cheltenham Road, London, SE15.

Mr. Tracey: I understand that the tenants mentioned are among many who have met delay in exercising the right to buy their homes from Southwark borough council. The Department is discussing with the council the reasons for the delays and its proposals for dealing with them.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses and flats, sold since 1979, have been repossessed because the owners could not afford the mortgage repayments.

Mr. Tracey: The available information on properties taken into possession by building societies and local authorities does not distinguish former council dwellings from other housing.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money each local authority received in capital receipts in each year from 1981 to 1986; and how much money each local authority has in the form of accumulated capital receipts at present.

Mr. Chope: I have today placed in the Library a table showing for each local authority and in total *(a)* for each financial year from 1981-82 to 1985-86 the amount authorities have reported they have received from disposals of fixed assets, repayments of grants and advances, and capital receipts by virtue of regulations made under section 75(5) of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980; and *(b)* the amount of accumulated capital receipts at the end of 1985-86 which could be converted into cash. Figures for capital receipts in 1986-87 or accumulated receipts at the end of that year are not yet available.

Acidic Environment

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the details supplied to date by his Department, concerning estimates of future energy demand and fuel mix required, as input to the individual studies comprising the Fellowship of Engineering's project entitled, "Acidic Emissions: Study of Combustion Processes and Abatement Technologies"; and if he will outline progress with the project and the results which have so far been produced.

Mr. Waldegrave: Estimates of future energy demand and fuel mix have not been required for any of the individual studies within the fellowship's project and none have been suplied by the Department. The final report is due to be submitted by 31 March 1988, but good progress by the fellowship means that the detailed technical and economic assessment of abatement technologies will probably be available earlier.

Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding

Sir Kenneth Lewis asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, in the light of the public support for a statute of Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding, as well as support from within the House of Commons itself, he will now give consideration to erecting such a statue.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend will give favourable and urgent consideration to the application under the Public Statues (Metropolis) Act 1854 which has just been submitted.

Rating Reform

Mr. Duffy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what estimate he has made of the effect of the poll tax in the city of Sheffield on a family of two in *(a)* a terraced house with a rateable value of £120, *(b)* a semi-detached house with a rateable value of £200 and *(c)* a detached house with a rateable value of £400;

(2) what estimate he has made of the effect of a poll tax on an average family of four in the city of Sheffield.

Mr. Chope: The Government have proposals for a community charge and not a poll tax.

Illustrative figures were placed in the Library on 1 April showing the community charge figure in each area if the system had been fully in operation in 1986-87, and on the basis of expenditure and grant figures applicable to that year. On these assumptions, the community charge in Sheffield would have been £322. It would have been only £170 if spending had been in accordance with our assessment of need to spend, instead of what was actually spent.

The average domestic rate bill in Sheffield in 1986-87, using adjusted poundages, was £450 per hereditament. On the same basis, houses with rateable values of £120, £200 and £400 would have had rate bills of £397, £662 and £1,325 respectively.

Empty Houses and Rent Arrears

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many flats and houses owned by local authorities were vacant at the latest available date; and what were the rent arrears of the same authorities for the last convenient financial year.

Mr. John Patten: Estimates derived from English local authorities' housing investment programme returns showed that there were 113,300 vacant local authority dwellings at 1 April 1986, including 1,700 which were closed awaiting demolition. Based on figures supplied to the Department by English local authorities in their housing subsidy claim forms, cumulative rent arrears at 1 April 1986 amounted to £211 million.

Construction Industry (Symposium)

Mr. Weetch asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received regarding the forthcoming international symposium on the organisation and management of construction organised by the Chartered Institute of Building due to be held between 7 and 10 September; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: My predecessor, the hon. Member for Eastbourne, (Mr. Gow) gave his support to the Chartered Institute of Building's successful application to hold this international symposium in London. I subsequently agreed to give the opening address. I am sure that the symposium, which is addressing issues of particular interest to the United Kingdom construction industry, will be an enormous success.

House Building

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many houses are currently under construction; and how this number compares with the position in May 1979.

Mr. Tracey: I shall answer this question shortly.

Mr. Leighton: asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy towards the public sector building houses to rent.

Mr. Tracey: The aim of the Government is to encourage the maximum provision of rented housing outside the public sector. Local authorities should target their own provision more closely on those in greatest housing need.

Improvement Grants

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to announce modifications to the improvement grant procedure following the consultation he carried out with the publication of the Green Paper "Home Improvement—New Approach".

Mr. John Patten: Shortly.

Rates

Mr. Sean Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek to amend the law relating to the effect on the rateable value of homes of installing central heating; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: We intend to abolish domestic rates starting in 1990. This will sweep away all the anomalies of the present rating system including those associated with the installation of central heating systems since 1974. I trust that we shall have the hon. Member's support.

Housing Statistics

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the numbers of houses, also expressed as a percentage of the total, in Coventry, west midlands and nationally which are *(a)* substandard dwellings; unfit, *(b)* fit but lacking one or more basic amenity, *(c)* non-substandard dwellings in need of renovation.

Mr. Tracey [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 May 1987]: Local authorities are asked for these figures in their annual housing investment programme returns; the figures are not necessarily comparable as authorities' criteria differ and they are not consistent with national estimates from the English house condition survey of 1981.

The figures provided by Coventry and estimates for the west midlands and for England, including allowance for any missing returns, are as follows:

	Coventry		*West Midlands*		*England*	
	No.	*Percentage of stock*	*No.*	*Percentage of stock*	*No.*	*Percentage of stock*
Unfit dwellings	944	0·8	103,800	5·2	654,000	3·5
Dwellings fit but lacking basic amenities	4,935	4·1	64,100	3·2	501,000	2·7
Non-standard dwellings in need of renovation[1]	4,182	3·5	308,500	15·4	2,890,000	15·4

[1] Dwellings requiring repairs estimated at more than £3,000 (£4,200 in Greater London).

Pressurised Water Reactors

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 6 May, *Official Report*, columns *713-4*, what information he has on the area required for a pressurised water reactor installation similar in size to that which was the subject of the Sizewell inquiry, and on whether such a unit would fit on to the existing site at Hinkley Point.

Mr. Goodlad: I have been asked to reply.

Plans of Sizewell B were submitted by the Central Electricity Generating Board in its application for consent to construct the station. This, together with considerable further evidence on the site, was given to the inquiry held by Sir Frank Layfield. The area required for permanent operational works is about 40 acres.

It is for the CEGB to consider the suitability of a site for the construction of a power station before making an application for consent to my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State. My right hon. Friend has not yet received an application for consent to build a pressurised water reactor at Hinkley Point.

THE ARTS

Attenborough Report

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton asked the Minister for the Arts what is his policy towards the recommendation of the Attenborough report on access to the arts for the disabled, a copy of which has been sent to him.

Mr. Luce: Many of the Attenborough recommendations have been acted upon. The Arts Council and other funding bodies have issued codes of practice; in addition, the Arts Council has appointed a full-time disability officer. I am satisfied that the arts bodies for which I am responsible are fully aware of the needs and aspirations of disabled people, and are doing all that they can in their support.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Ships' Stores (Duty)

Mr. William Powell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what provision he intends to make to relieve from duty stores imported for use by ships lying in United Kingdom ports; and if he will make a statement.

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Mr. Lawson: There is already adequate provision for stores to be shipped free of duty direct from the United Kingdom. However, it is the Government's intention to introduce legislation as early as possible in the next Parliament which will enable imported stores to be transhipped in the United Kingdom without payment of duty and tax. Provision will also be made for customs duty to be relieved on certain imported stores consumed in port prior to departure.

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. Pollock asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the availability of capital gains tax rollover relief for oil licence gains.

Mr. Norman Lamont: For a number of years the Inland Revenue has proceeded on the basis that the present law does not allow capital gains tax rollover relief in respect of gains on the disposal of any oil licence interests. A recent decision of the special commissioners indicates that this understanding of existing law was incorrect, and that an oil licence may be a qualifying asset for rollover relief purposes. The Government propose, as early as possible in the next Parliament, to bring forward legislation with retrospective effect to make clear that this relief is not in fact available for oil licence gains.

ECOFIN

Mr. Rowe asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the latest meeting of the European Community's Economic and Finance Council.

Mr. Brooke: The Community's Economic and Finance Council met in Brussels on 11 May. I represented the United Kingdom.

The Council discussed the Commission's proposals for the future financing of the Community. I made clear our view that ways must be found of controlling Community expenditure, on agriculture and other programmes, before it was appropriate even to consider possible increases in own resources, and that any changes in the Fontainebleau abatement system would have to be for the better. The Council will resume discussion at its June meeting.

The Council also considered the budgetary situation in the current year. I suggested that the anticipated expenditure overrun be financed by use of headroom within the 1·4 per cent. VAT ceiling, by savings in the 1987 agricultural price fixing and by a switch from advances to reimbursement of agricultural guarantee expenditure. I made clear the United Kingdom's firm opposition to supplementary financing through an intergovernmental agreement.

The Council had a first discussion on the Commission's proposals on financial engineering and the financing of large scale infrastructure projects of European interest. The topic was referred without commitment to officials for further consideration.

The Council agreed in principle by qualified majority, pending discussion with the European Parliament at its June meeting, on a reference framework for the 1988 Community budget of 36·6 billion ecu (about £25·5 billion at current exchange rates) in accordance with the budgetary discipline conclusions of December 1984. The framework provides for expenditure on agricultural market support and non-obligatory expenditure to be kept within the budget discipline guideline limit, now adjusted to cover expenditure in Spain and Portugal, and the maximum rate of increase as laid down in the treaty respectively. In respect of the agricultural guideline, the Council noted that it might be necessary to take exceptional circumstances into consideration in due course in accordance with article 2 of the Council's December 1984 budget discipline conclusions.

The Council discussed a draft directive on credit and suretyship insurance, and agreed to refer it back to permanent representatives for further work.

Following discussion at its March meeting, the Council received a report from the Commission on the financial effects for Spain and Portugal of the Council's decision to delay reimbursement to member states of losses incurred on the disposal of butter stocks. The Council asked permanent representatives to examine the Commission's report with a view to possible discussion at a future meeting of the Council.

Mortgage Interest Relief

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, pursuant to his reply dated 6 April, *Official Report*, column 74, showing the average unearned income and average amount of mortgage interest relief in each income band at higher rates, he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of incomes in each of these two categories in the same detail.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 May 1987]: Information is given in the tables. The estimates are based on a projection from the 1984-85 survey of personal incomes and are therefore provisional.

Distribution of Total Income 1987-88 for Higher Rate Tax Payers[1]

Range of total income Lower limit (£ pa)	*Total number of incomes ('000s)*	*Number of incomes with investment income ('000s)*	*Number of incomes with mortgage interest relief ('000s)*	*Total number of incomes ('000s)*	*Number of incomes with investment income ('000s)*	*Number of incomes with mortgage interest relief ('000s)*
		Single people			*Married couples without wife's earnings*	
20,000	65	45	15	60	40	20
25,000	55	40	20	100	75	70
30,000	25	20	10	50	40	30
35,000	10	10	5	35	30	20
40,000	20	20	10	45	40	30
50,000	25	20	10	55	45	30

PRINTING

Range of total income Lower limit (£ pa)	*Total number of incomes ('000s)*	*Number of incomes with investment income ('000s)*	*Number of incomes with mortgage interest relief ('000s)*	*Total number of incomes ('000s)*	*Number of incomes with investment income ('000s)*	*Number of incomes with mortgage interest relief ('000s)*
Two-earner married couples						
	Without a wife's earnings election			*With a wife's earnings election*		
20,000	55	40	15	0	0	0
25,000	225	175	150	50	35	25
30,000	90	80	70	110	80	75
35,000	40	35	30	70	55	50
40,000	30	30	20	50	45	30
50,000	30	30	20	50	45	30

[1] Includes some 130,000 tax units that are taken out of higher rate tax following the wife's earnings election.

Private Schools (Charitable Status)

Mr. Radice asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax revenue it is estimated his Department loses as a result of the charitable status enjoyed by private schools.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 May 1987]: I regret that the information is not available.

Mr. D. P. Morris

Mr. Pawsey asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth might receive a reply to his letter dated 4 April referring to Mr. D. P. Morris of Jully and Barber Ltd., Rugby.

Mr. Brooke: I have today replied to my hon. Friend's letter of April 8 concerning Jully and Barber.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Chieftain Tanks (Iran)

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the West German Government about the supply to Iran by MAN of Germany of replacement power packs for Chieftain tanks supplied by the United Kingdom before the Iran-Iraq war; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: We are not aware of this specific proposal, but if my hon. Friend would care to pass on to me any details he may have, we would be happy to raise the matter with the Federal German authorities. As recorded in my answer to my hon. Friend on 9 December 1986, we have in the past raised with the FRG the supply of Chieftain tank engines to Iran, and it is our understanding that their policy of neutrality in the conflict does not permit the export of goods for military use to areas of tension.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Eggar: The diplomatic and aid wings of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have sponsored advertisements in national newspapers on 216 occasions during the three years to 31 March 1987. The majority of these advertisements were for recruitment purposes.

The national and local newspapers in which advertisements were placed during this period are:

National
The Daily Express
The Daily Mail
The Daily Telegraph
The Financial Times
The Guardian
The Independent
The Sun
The Observer
The Sunday Times

Local
Adur Heral
Aylesbury and Wendover Times
Bedfordshire Times
Belfast Telegraph
Birmingham Evening Mail
Brighton Evening Argus
Buckingham Advertiser
Buckingham Herald
Bucks and Herts News
Citizen
Croydon Advertiser
Edinburgh Evening News
Glasgow Herald
Herald
Kent and Sussex Courier
Liverpool Echo
London Evening Standard
Manchester Evening News
Mid Sussex Times
Milton Keynes Gazette
Milton Keynes Mirror
Milton Keynes Standard
Newcastle Evening Chronicle
Newport Pagnell and Olney Standard
Northampton Chronicle and Echo
Post
Scotsman
South Wales Echo
Sussex Express and County Herald
West Sussex Gazette
Yorkshire Evening News

The following newspaper publishing groups received paid advertising space as a result of this newspaper advertising:

Associated Newspapers Group Plc.
Bedfordshire Times Group
Birmingham Post and Mail Ltd.
Bucks and Herts Newspaper Group
Chiltern Newspapers
Courier and Printing Publishing Company
Daily Telegraph Plc.
Croydon Advertising Group
EMAP Provincial News Ltd.
Fleet Holdings
George Outram and Company Ltd.
Guardian and Manchester Evening News Plc.
Herald Newspaper Group

Hillingdon and South Bucks Newspaper Group
International Thompson Organisation
Liverpool Daily Post and Echo Plc.
Lonrho Plc.
Mid Sussex Times Group
News Corporation
Newspaper Publishing Plc.
Pearson Plc.
Post Newspaper Group
United Newspaper Group
United Newspaper Plc.
Westminster Press Limited
Worthing Gazette and Herald Group

Iraqi Pilots (Training)

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement regarding the training of Iraqi pilots at Kidlington, including *(a)* the number of Iraqi pilots currently at Kidlington, *(b)* whether their training is intended to equip them as military or civilian pilots, and *(c)* whether and on what basis his Department is satisfied that the skills acquired in the United Kingdom will not be used in the war against Iran.

Mr. Renton: We do not have details of the number of foreign students, including Iraqis, currently training at the privately owned and run Oxford air training school at Kidlington. We are aware, however, that the training leads to civilian pilots licences, both private and commercial, and we understand that the skills obtained cannot of themselves be used in an offensive role.

Residence Re-entry Visas

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what basis the cost of residence re-entry visas to the United Kingdom is calculated; and what information he has as to how this figure compares with the fee charged by other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries.

Mr. Eggar: "Visa exempt" stamps issued in the United Kingdom and "returning resident" visas issued overseas to nationals of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Ghana are issued free of charge. For other visa nationals residence re-entry visas issued in the United Kingdom and returning resident visas issued overseas cost £20 for a single entry visa and £40 for a multiple entry visa. These are the United Kingdom's standard worldwide charge for all short-term and multiple entry visas. They are calculated on the basis tht income from fees should as much as possible offset the costs of the entry clearance operation. Details of comparative fees charged by other OECD member states are not available centrally.

Council of Europe

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement regarding the level of support in the United Kingdom for the work of the Council of Europe in terms of publicity.

Mr. Eggar: Publicising the work of the Council of Europe in member states is the responsibility of the council's directorate of press and information.

Western European Union

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement regarding the level of support in the United Kingdom for the work of the Western European Union in terms of publicity.

Mr. Eggar: The WEU Secretary General has responsibility for publicising Western European Union activities. British Ministers keep Parliament and the public informed on a regular basis. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) on 30 April at column 197.

Hong Kong

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what stage the discussion and negotiations with the People's Republic of China have reached with regard to the Fugitive Offenders Act (Hong Kong) Order 1967;

(2) if he will make a statement on the timetable for enacting legislation with regard to the Fugitive Offenders Act (Hong Kong) Order 1967;

(3) what is his intention regarding the application of safeguards embodied in the Fugitive Offenders Act (Hong Kong) Order after the termination of British sovereignty and jurisdiction;

(4) what safeguards will be contained within the terms of Fugitive Offenders Act, disregarding the external relations provisions of section 2.2 *(a)*, after the termination of British sovereignty and jurisdiction over Hong Kong;

(5) what information he has as to what amendments to the People's Republic of China constitution have been agreed in order that for the purposes of extradition Hong Kong will not be deemed a colony of the People's Republic of China;

(6) whether the safeguards embodied in the Fugitive Offenders Act (Hong Kong) Order will be formalised in treaty form with the People's Republic of China;

(7) what guarantees have been agreed on behalf of the new sovereign power regarding post-custodial treatment of any person extradited to Hong Kong under the provisions of the Fugitive Offenders Act;

(8) whether the localisation of all legislation that is presently derived from the United Kingdom includes power to amend the Fugitive Offenders Act (Hong Kong) Order prior to 1997;

(9) what information he has as to whether the proposed amendment to the constitution of the People's Republic of China is to include a reference to the speciality principle.

Mr. Renton: The arrangements currently in force in respect of Hong Kong as regards the return of fugitive offenders to and from the territory cannot subsist in their present form, beyond the resumption by China of sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997. We are considering what action would be appropriate to ensure that suitable arrangements can continue in force in respect of Hong Kong after that date. The continuity after 1997 of such arrangements affecting Hong Kong will require consultation with the Chinese Government.

Entry Clearance Applications

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the income per month from entry clearance applications for each post in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Ghana since October 1986.

Mr. Eggar: Receipts from entry clearance fees at posts in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Ghana are as follows. Figures currently available centrally relate only to the final quarter of 1986.

	Pounds Sterling (to the nearest £50)
New Delhi	136,150
Bombay	194,650
Calcutta	32,100
Madras	25,650
Islamabad	147,650
Karachi	154,200
Dhaka	611,350
Lagos	102,550
Kaduna	30,550
Accra	72,100
Total	1,506,950

Sellafield

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has concerning the decision in the Energy, Research and Technology Committee of the European Parliament on 29 April to initiate proceedings against the European Commission in the European Court over the apparent refusal of Euratom to release to the European Parliament specific safeguards documentation on the Magnox reprocessing line at Sellafield.

Mr. Renton: Although its meeting on 29 April was held in camera, the Committee has for some time sought full details of the arrangements, announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy on 4 June 1986, between the Commission and the United Kingdom authorities on the implementation of Euratom safeguards at Sellafield.

I understand that the Commission had refused to release these details on the grounds that the information is, like all such arrangements, confidential, and that as a result the Committee is considering taking action in the European Court against the Commission.

Argentina (Arms)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish the assurances received from the Libyan Government that Libyan arms were not being made available to Argentina at the time of the Falklands conflict.

Mr. Eggar: It is not our practice to publish confidential exchanges between Governments.

Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government will make a further contribution to the United Nations voluntary fund for the victims of torture.

Mr. Eggar: I am pleased to announce that we have decided that the United Kingdom should make a contribution of £25,000 to this fund.

Women (Discrimination)

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's initial report to the United Nations due under article 18 of the 1979 convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Mr. Eggar: The report is being finalised and will shortly be submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General. Copies will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Foreign Languages

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the number of students in foreign languages expected to graduate in 1987; what was the number for each of the last 10 years; and what are the numbers for *(a)* all languages except French and *(b)* all languages except French and German.

Mrs. Rumbold: The latest available information is shown in the following table. The Department has not produced projections for future years at this level of detail. A small fall is expected in the numbers graduating in 1986, followed by a small increase in 1987 and following years.

Graduates in foreign languages *Thousands*

	1976	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
University (Great Britain) – Year of completion of course										
First degree graduates										
Foreign languages	4·7	5·0	5·2	5·4	5·7	5·9	6·1	6·2	6·3	5·3
Foreign languages except French	3·8	4·0	4·2	4·4	4·7	4·9	5·0	5·1	5·2	4·2
Foreign languages except French and German	2·9	3·2	3·4	3·6	3·9	4·0	4·0	4·0	4·1	3·7
Higher degree graduates										
Foreign languages	0·7	0·6	0·7	0·8	0·7	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·9
Foreign languages except French	0·6	0·6	0·6	0·7	0·7	0·7	0·7	0·7	0·7	0·8
Foreign languages except French and German	0·5	0·5	0·6	0·6	0·6	0·7	0·7	0·6	0·6	0·8
CNAA[1] (United Kingdom) – Year of confirment										
First degree graduates										
Foreign languages	0·3	0·3	0·4	0·4	0·4	0·6	0·4	0·5	0·5	0·9
Foreign languages except French	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	1976	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Foreign languages except French and German	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Higher degree graduates										
Foreign languages	—	—	—	—	—	0·1	—	—	—	—
Foreign languages except French	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Foreign languages except French and German	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

[1] Council for National Academic Awards. These statistics relate to the numbers of awards conferred by CNAA during the year and differ from the numbers of students completing their courses. In particular figures for the years 1982, 1983 and 1984 underestimate the latter and the figure for 1985 is an overestimate.

n/a Not available.

16 to 19-year-olds

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students aged between 16 and 19 years of age entered full-time courses of non-advanced further education in England and Wales as a proportion of all 16 year-olds in each academic year from 1979-80 to 1986-87.

Mrs. Rumbold: The figures as a percentage of all 16 to 18-year-olds are as follows. It would not be meaningful to express this as a percentage of 16-year-olds only. Figures for Wales are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Students in full-time non advanced further education
England

November	*Percentage of all 16-18's*[1]
1979	9·2
1980	9·7
1981	11·1
1982	12·4
1983	11·8
1984	11·8
1985	12·2
[2]1986	12·3

[1] Those aged 16, 17 and 18 as at the previous 31st August.

[2] Provisional.

Leeds

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will institute an inquiry under section 93 of the Education Act 1944 into the administration of education in Leeds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has no plans to set up such an inquiry.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has had seeking a formal investigation into the administration of education in Leeds.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has received no recent representations on this matter.

Comprehensive Education

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to how many other EEC countries have a comprehensive system of education similar to that which exists in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Rumbold: Education in EC member states differs according to history, culture and political development. Direct comparisons are not possible. Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Spain operate a non-selective approach to education up to the end of compulsory schooling (variously 14 to 16).

Expenditure Policy

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) when the analysis was completed for the 1986 report by Her Majesty's inspectors on the effects of local authority expenditure policies on education provision in England;

(2) if he will publish the 1986 report by Her Majesty's inspectors on the effects of local authority expenditure policies on education provision in England.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I understand from Her Majesty's senior chief inspector of schools that work has not yet been completed on the analysis for and the content of the annual expenditure report for 1986. The timing of its submission to Ministers is entirely and solely a matter for HM inspectorate. The question of publication can only be considered when I receive the report.

GCSE Teachers (In-service Training)

Mr. Sumberg asked the secretary of State for Education and Science what further action the Government plan to take to promote opportunities for in-service training for GCSE teachers.

Mrs. Rumbold: From the beginning of the next academic year, the Education (School Teachers' Pay and Conditions of Employment) Order 1987 provides that teachers will be available for work on five days a year beyond those days on which they will be required to teach pupils. It will be for schools and local education authorities to decide how best to use those five days. The Government expect that a substantial part of the available time will be devoted to in-service training, including training related to GCSE.

The Government's monitoring of the introduction of the GCSE has shown that for schools and teachers the provision of two days' closure for GCSE in-service training last summer term was helpful. Many local education authorities, schools and teachers think it would be beneficial if a similar provision during the present academic year was provided, before the second and final year of the first GCSE courses begins in September.

The Government have therefore decided to make further, special provision in the intervening period before the new conditions of service come into force. Accordingly, my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales have today laid before the House regulations which amend the number of days on whch a school shall meet, consequential to the Education (School Teachers' Pay and Conditions of Employment) Order 1987, and also enable local education authorities in England and Wales to close their schools to pupils for one day before 31 July 1987 in order to allow teaching staff to undertake GCSE in-service training.

WALES

Chernobyl Disaster

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many meetings he has had with the farming unions during the past three months, at which the losses arising from the Chernobyl disaster have been discussed; and if he will now make a further statement on improving his compensation scheme for farmers in Wales affected by this disaster.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I have had a number of meetings with the farming unions during the last three months to discuss compensation arrangements for producers affected by the Chernobyl incident. I and my ministerial colleagues have concluded that a further element of compensation is justified for the extra costs of monitoring and marking sheep before they can be released from the restricted area. We expect to make an early announcement on the details of this scheme.

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Wales on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I have not sponsored any advertising in national newspapers in the last three years. I have, however, sponsored local advertising for the right-to-buy campaign in the *South Wales Echo*, the *South Wales Evening Post*, the *South Wales Argus* and the *Wrexham/Chester Evening Leader*.

Where the Welsh Office has been associated with national campaigns on AIDS, drugs misuse and road safety sponsored by major Whitehall Departments, I have sponsored advertisements in the Welsh language newspaper *Y Cymro* and in the *Western Mail*, the *Liverpool Daily Post* and the *South Wales Argus*.

The *South Wales Echo*, and the *Western Mail* are part of the Thomson publishing group. The *Liverpool Daily Post* is a member of the Trinity International Publishing Group. The *South Wales Argus* is a member of Express Newspapers plc; the *South Wales Evening Post* is part of the Northcliffe Newspapers Group.

Both the *Wrexham/Chester Evening Leader* and *Y Cymro* are part of the North Wales Newspaper group.

Thoracic Medicine (Consultants)

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has plans to increase the number of consultants in thoracic medicine in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: It is for individual health authorities to assess the need for additional consultants in thoracic medicine in Wales, on the basis of local needs, priorities and resources. We are always ready to consider requests by authorities to approve additional consultant posts, in the light of advice from the Welsh Medical and Dental Manpower Committee.

Health Services (Capital Provision)

Mr. Raffan asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give details of capital provision for hospital and community health services in Wales in 1987-88.

Mr. Mark Robinson: A capital spending programme totalling £53·4 million has been approved for hospital and community health services in Wales in 1987-88.

The programme includes expenditure of £13·3 million for major schemes already in progress, the greatest part of which goes towards the continuing construction of Llanelli general hospital. Other schemes which benefit include developments at Llandough near Cardiff, Morriston and Singleton in Swansea and Withybush in Haverfordwest, remedial work at West Wales general hospital, Carmarthen and the University hospital of Wales, Cardiff and renovation work and the Prince of Wales hospital Rhydlafar and St. David's hospital, Carmarthen.

Some £3·7 million has been allocated for centrally funded developments and regional services which include the improvement of cardiac services in South Glamorgan, the implementation of recommendations made in the report on regional services in north Wales and the provision of the first of the medium secure psychiatric units. Three further computerised tomography scanners are to be purchased and will be located at Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor, East Glamorgan hospital, Church Village and Velindre hospital in Cardiff, thus further extending the availability of this valuable diagnostic technique.

Other allocations include £3·6 million for computer and information technology developments and the establishment of a resource management pilot scheme in West Glamorgan, £1·5 million for psychiatric bridging finance to help move from large psychiatric hospitals to community care and £0·3 million for the provision of equipment in special care baby units as part of the perinatal mortality initiative. A block allocation of £24·5 million has been made to district health authorities, a 14 per cent. increase over their 1986-87 allocation. Allocations to individual authorities are as follows:—

	£ million
Clwyd	4·1
East Dyfed	1·8
Gwent	4·3
Gwynedd	1·5
Mid Glamorgan	4.7
Pembrokeshire	0·9
Powys	0·9
South Glamorgan	2·2
West Glamorgan	4·1

Milk Quotas

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish the figures for the amount of milk quotas sold by Welsh producers to producers outside Wales, the amount bought by Welsh producers from outside Wales, and the net loss or gain to Wales, since the scheme came into operation and differentiating between north and south Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Movement of quota in and out of Wales as recorded by the Milk Marketing board during the period 1 April 1985 to 17 February 1987 has been as follows:

Million litres

	North Wales	*South Wales*	*All Wales*
In	+4·8	+4·0	+8·8
Out	−4·6	−12·5	−17·1
Net loss or gain	+0·2	−8·3	−8·5
Loss as a percentage of total quota	—	−0·8	−0·54

Health Authorities

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report (a)* a list of the constituencies served by each district health authority and *(b)* a list of the health authorities serving each constituency.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The only parliamentary constituency in Wales served by two district health authorities is that of Ceredigion and Pembroke, North, which is divided between East Dyfed and Pembrokeshire district health authorities. Otherwise, constituencies are contained entirely within health authorities, as follows:

District Health Authority and Constituency

Clwyd
- Alyn and Deeside
- Clwyd North West
- Clwyd South West
- Delyn
- Wrexham

East Dyfed
- Carmarthen
- Ceredigion and Pembroke North (part)
- Llanelli

Gwent
- Blaenau Gwent
- Islwyn
- Monmouth
- Newport East
- Newport West
- Torfaen

Gwynedd
- Caernarfon
- Conwy
- Meirionnydd Nant Conwy
- Ynys Môn

Mid Glamorgan
- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Cynon Valley
- Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
- Ogmore
- Pontypridd
- Rhondda

Pembrokeshire
- Ceredigion and Pembroke North (part)
- Pembroke

Powys
- Brecon and Radnor
- Montgomery

South Glamorgan
- Cardiff Central
- Cardiff North
- Cardiff South and Penarth
- Cardiff West
- Vale of Glamorgan

West Glamorgan
- Aberavon
- Gower
- Neath
- Swansea East
- Swansea West

M4 (Extension)

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans to extend the M4 to Ceredigion; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: No, but the dualling of the A48 between the end of the M4 and Carmarthen will result in a greatly improved route as far as Carmarthen. Of the two schemes needed to complete this work we expect the Cross Hands/Llandarog bypass to be open to traffic later this year while "Roads in Wales 1985" envisages a start on the Nant-y-Caws/Coed Hirion bypass before the end of 1987.

In addition, Dyfed county council as the local highway authority is drawing up proposals to improve the county roads between Carmarthen and Ceredigion. At the appropriate time, consideration will be given to the eligibility of such schemes for transport supplementary grant.

SCOTLAND

Labour Statistics

Mr. Corrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of persons employed in the Irvine travel-to-work area ward by ward for the years 1976 to 1986.

Mr. Lang: The table gives the figures for April 1981, from the census of population small area statistics. Such information is not available for the other years specified.

Number of usual residents, aged 16 or over, who were working

	Number
Cunninghame District Ward	
Irvine West	1,434
Irvine Townhead	1,646
Irvine Vineburgh	1,759
Irvine North	1,818
Irvine Woodlands	1,864
Dreghorn	1,697
Broomlands	1,628
Bourtreehill	1,494
Girdle Toll	765
Irvine Landward	819
Kilwinning East	2,186
Kilwinning South	1,909
Kilwinning West	2,339
Stevenston North	1,894
Stevenston South	1,918
Beith	1,887
Dalry	1,619
Garnock East	1,815
Kilbirnie South	1,670
Kilbirnie North	1,597
Saltcoats East	1,483
South Beach	1,625
Saltcoats North	1,598
Ardrossan South	1,723
Ardrossan North	1,895

	Number
West Kilbride	1,741
Largs South	1,412
Largs North	2,077
Fairlie, Skelmorlie and Cumbrae	1,516
Renfrew District Ward	
Lochwinnoch	1,773

Rates

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the total amount of rebates paid in each regional authority area in Scotland to ratepayers who are eligible for relief on their rates bills under the legislation passed after the 1985 revaluation.

Mr. Ancram: The information for 1985-86 and 1986-87 is set out in the table. Figures for each region for 1987-88 are not yet available. It is estimated that total rebates for Scotland for that year will amount to about £13·7 million.

£ Million

Authority	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Borders	0·563	0·413
Central	0·983	0·743
Dumfries and Galloway	0·774	0·613
Fife	0·810	0·578
Grampian	2·336	1·843
Highland	0·391	0·426
Lothian	4·746	3·328
Strathclyde	11·495	8·793
Tayside	2·321	1·870
Total	24·419	18·607

Speech Problems

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what provision is available for the needs of languages disordered children in Scotland; how this compares with England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: Where a child in Scotland has a language disorder which constitutes a learning difficulty giving rise to special educational needs of a pronounced, specific or continuing nature, the education authority in whose area the child resides is required to assess those needs and thereafter provide fully for them. The decision on precisely what provision to make is a matter for the education authority. The procedure for opening Records of Special Education Needs under Section 60 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 is similar to the process of statementing provided for in England by Section 7 of the Education Act 1981.

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the numbers of *(a)* preschool age children, *(b)* primary schoolchildren and *(c)* secondary schoolchildren, with a specific language disorder in (i) Scotland, (ii) the Strathclyde region and (iii) Glasgow district.

Mr. MacKay: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what provision there is for the rehabilitation of speech problems in road traffic accident victims in *(a)* Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland.

Mr. John MacKay: The provision of speech therapy services is a matter for individual health boards, but the Scottish Home and Health Department funds a Scottish centre of technology for the communication impaired, based at the Victoria infirmary, Glasgow, which has been officially opened today by the chairman of the Greater Glasgow health board. This centre reinforces local effort by providing a Scotland-wide specialist service involving assessment and provision of aids for people with speech problems, and advising professional staff and disseminating information about advances in this important field. There are now 339·4 (whole-time equivalent) speech therapists employed in the Scottish Health Service.

Chernobyl Disaster

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the costs incurred by his Department following the Chernobyl accident on *(a)* compensation for farmers, *(b)* equipment purchased for monitoring contamination, *(c)* staff costs on monitoring and administration of compensation schemes and *(d)* staff costs on public information.

Mr. John MacKay: Compensation to farmers amounted to £1·4 million. Monitoring equipment was purchased at a cost of £32,000. In addition, expenditure of £324,000 was incurred on laboratory sampling and associated work. I regret it is not possible readily to identify the staff costs attributable to monitoring, administration of compensation and public information.

Torness

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if it is his intention to place stocks of iodine tablets at Innerwick primary school, in view of its proximity to Torness power station.

Mr. Lang: The South of Scotland Electricity Board, as operator of Torness, is responsible for providing potassium iodate tablets as part of the emergency planning arrangements. Stocks are held by the police for issue in the area around Torness. It is for the board and the police to consider whether it would be appropriate to hold stocks at Innerwick primary school and if so to consult the education authority.

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he intends to make any alteration to the Torness emergency plan; and if he will extend the area covered by that plan in view of the recommendations made in the Layfield report on the Sizewell B inquiry.

Mr. Lang: These are matters for the South of Scotland Electricity Board as operators of the site and for Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive as licensing authority.

Fisheries Protection

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated remaining life of his Department's recently acquired Fokker F27-200 aircraft in terms of flying hours of Scottish fishery patrol conditions; how long he estimates that the aircraft will be able to remain in service with the workload described in his reply of 6 May, *Official Report*, column 446; and what recommendations have been received from *(a)* the

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manufacturer and *(b)* the Civil Aviation Authority on adjustment to the remaining life of the aircraft, in terms of flying hours, to take account of the type of service for which he intends to use it.

Mr. John MacKay: The advice obtained from expert sources indicate that the F27 will have a working life of at least 10 years when employed in the maritime environment, taking account of the cycles remaining and the utilisation envisaged by my Department, as stated in my answer of 5 May to the hon. Member at column 446.

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the outcome of his consideration of tenders to operate his Department's aerial fishery protection patrols.

Mr. John MacKay: The continuance of the contract in respect of inshore aerial surveillance of Scottish fisheries from 1 September 1987, initially for three years, to be undertaken by the Cessna Titan was awarded to the existing contractor, Northair Aviation Ltd, on 2 April 1987. Consideration of the tenders in respect of offshore aerial surveillance is still under way and a decision is expected shortly.

Health Boards

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report (a)* a list of the constituencies served by each health board and *(b)* a list of the health boards serving each constituency.

Mr. John MacKay: The information is as follows:

(a) Health Board and Constituency

- *Argyll and Clyde*
  - Argyle and Bute
  - Dumbarton
  - Eastwood (see also Greater Glasgow)[1]
  - Greenock and Port Glasgow
  - Paisley North
  - Paisley South
  - Renfrew West and Inverclyde
- *Ayrshire and Arran*
  - Ayr
  - Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley
  - Cunninghame North
  - Cunninghame South
  - Kilmarnock and Loudoun
- *Borders*
  - Roxburgh and Berwickshire
  - Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale
- *Dumfries and Galloway*
  - Dumfries
  - Galloway and Upper Nithsdale
- *Fife*
  - Dunfermline East
  - Dunfermline West
  - Fife Central
  - Fife North East
  - Kirkcaldy
- *Forth Valley*
  - Clackmannan
  - Falkirk East
  - Falkirk West
  - Stirling
- *Grampian*
  - Aberdeen North
  - Aberdeen South
  - Banff and Buchan
  - Gordon
  - Kincardine and Deeside
  - Moray
- *Greater Glasgow*
  - Clydebank and Milngavie
  - Eastwood (see also Argyll and Clyde)[1]
  - Glasgow Cathcart
  - Glasgow Central
  - Glasgow Garscadden
  - Glasgow Govan
  - Glasgow Hillhead
  - Glasgow Pollok
  - Glasgow Provan
  - Glasgow Rutherglen
  - Glasgow Shettleston
  - Glasgow Springburn
  - Monklands West (see also Lanarkshire)[1]
  - Strathkelvin and Bearsden
- *Highland*
  - Caithness and Sutherland
  - Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber
  - Ross, Cromarty and Skye
- *Lanarkshire*
  - Clydesdale
  - Cumbernauld and Kilsyth
  - East Kilbride
  - Hamilton
  - Monklands East
  - Monklands West (see also Greater Glasgow)[1]
  - Motherwell North
  - Motherwell South
- *Lothian*
  - East Lothian
  - Edinburgh Central
  - Edinburgh East
  - Edinburgh Leith
  - Edinburgh Pentlands
  - Edinburgh South
  - Edinburgh West
  - Linlithgow
  - Livingston
  - Midlothian
- *Orkney*
  - Orkney and Shetland (see also Shetland)[1]
- *Shetland*
  - Orkney and Shetland (see also Orkney)[1]
- *Tayside*
  - Angus East
  - Dundee East
  - Dundee West
  - Perth and Kinross
  - Tayside North
- *Western Isles*
  - Western Isles

[1] Denotes split constituency.

(b) Constituency and Health Board

Aberdeen North—Grampian
Aberdeen South—Grampian
Angus East—Tayside
Argyll and Bute—Argyll and Clyde
Ayr—Ayrshire and Arran
Banff and Buchan—Grampian
Caithness and Sutherland—Highland
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley — Ayrshire and Arran
Clackmannan—Forth Valley
Clydebank and Milngavie—Greater Glasgow
Clydesdale—Lanarkshire
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth—Lanarkshire
Cunninghame North—Ayrshire and Arran
Cunninghame South—Ayrshire and Arran
Dumbarton—Argyll and Clyde
Dumfries—Dumfries and Galloway
Dundee East—Tayside
Dundee West—Tayside
Dunfermline East—Fife
Dunfermline West—Fife
East Kilbride—Lanarkshire
East Lothian—Lothian
Eastwood—Greater Glasgow and Argyll and Clyde
Edinburgh Central—Lothian
Edinburgh West—Lothian
Edinburgh Leith—Lothian
Edinburgh Pentlands—Lothian
Edinburgh South—Lothian

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Edinburgh West—Lothian
Falkirk East—Forth Valley
Falkirk West—Forth Valley
Fife Central—Fife
Fife North East—Fife
Galloway and Upper Nithsdale — Dumfries and Galloway
Glasgow Cathcart—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Central—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Garscadden—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Govan—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Hillhead—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Maryhill—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Pollok—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Provan—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Rutherglen—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Shettleston—Greater Glasgow
Glasgow Springburn—Greater Glasgow
Gordon—Grampian
Greenock and Port Glasgow—Argyll and Clyde
Hamilton—Lanarkshire
Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber—Highland
Kilmarnock and Loudoun—Ayrshire and Arran
Kincardine and Deeside—Grampian
Kirkcaldy—Fife
Linlithgow—Lothian
Livingston—Lothian
Midlothian—Lothian
Monklands East—Lanarkshire
Monklands West—Greater Glasgow and Lanarkshire
Moray—Grampian
Motherwell North—Lanarkshire
Motherwell South—Lanarkshire
Orkney and Shetland—Orkney and Shetland
Paisley North—Argyll and Clyde
Paisley South—Argyll and Clyde
Perth and Kinross—Tayside
Renfrew West and Inverclyde—Argyll and Clyde
Ross, Cromarty and Skye—Highland
Roxburgh and Berwickshire—Borders
Stirling—Forth Valley
Strathkelvin and Bearsden—Greater Glasgow
Tayside North—Tayside
Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale—Borders
Western Isles—Western Isles

Farm and Horticultural Development Scheme

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many farmers have been required to pay all or part of any grant given to them under the farm and horticultural development scheme for failing to meet the required output.

Mr. John MacKay: It is not possible to separate the details for the farm and horitculture development scheme and the agriculture and horticulture development scheme. Both schemes contained provision for the payment of guidance premium to farmers whose approved development plans were estimated to give them 50 per cent. or more of gross output from beef or sheepmeat at the end of their plans. For the two schemes combined, the number of farmers in Scotland eligible for guidance premium is 5,745. Guidance premium as been recovered in 11 cases for failure to achieve the required output level at the end of the plans, and action is in progress in two further such cases.

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many farmers have failed to meet the required 50 per cent. of output from beef production required by the farm and horticultural development scheme for beef development in Scotland.

Mr. John MacKay: Central records are maintained only of cases where failure to achieve 50 per cent. of gross output from beef or sheepmeat gives rise to recovery of guidance premium. Recovery is not automatic: it arises only where my Department is satisfied that a claimant failed to pursue his approved development plan and knowingly gave undertakings which could not be honoured. No record is kept of cases which failed to achieve the required output level but which did not give rise to recovery action.

North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board

Mr. Bill Walker asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what progress has been made by the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board in following up the report on the board by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission published in October 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: I have now received the second response of the NSHEB to the MMC report published in Autumn 1985. This decribes progress on steps taken by the board to meet the commission's conclusions. I have placed copies in the Library.

The board has responded in a constructive way to most of the MMC recommendations and good progress has been made since my statement to the House on 7 March 1986.

I am particularly pleased to note the positive steps the board has taken in relation to the areas for priority action identified by the commission.

The management services function has been expanded, manpower planning procedures have been developed, productivity monitoring procedures have been overhauled, and further work directed at establishing optimum manning levels is in hand. These initiatives are resulting in tighter control of manpower resources and their utilisation.

In line with MMC recommendations, the board's corporate plan now includes a range of specific operational and financial targets which have been set and will be monitored by the board. The efficiency review committee has been strengthened, measures to reduce the costs of meter reading billing and collection have been implemented and a revised debt collection policy is being introduced. I hope soon to agree with the board a new set of cost reduction performance aims to begin in the current financial year.

Good progress has been made in the development of management information systems designed to improve monitoring and guidance manuals have been issued over a range of activities—for example, planning, personnel and computer development.

An assessment procedure for allocating priorities within the distribution system refurbishment programme has been developed and is being applied to all projects. The resources now being devoted to the programme represent a major commitment on the part of the board.

Investment appraisal guidelines which take into account the commission's recommendations have been drafted and significant progress has been made towards developing a computer-based system covering both the financial and engineering aspects of project control.

In response to other recommendations, the board has set in hand a review of tariff structure and work designed to improve its forecasting methodology.

My officials will be keeping in touch with the board on these and other areas in which action to implement the MMC's recommendations is continuing. I have asked the board for a final round-up report in about two years time.

I should like to thank the MMC for its report on the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board. Its findings have been useful to the board in helping it to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

Countryside

Sir Hector Monro asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to initiate a review of changes in the countryside in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: My right hon. and learned Friend has decided to initiate a two-year research project to monitor change in landscape features in Scotland. The project will involve a full aerial photographic survey of the country, to be carried out by Planning and Mapping Ltd. It is hoped that the survey will make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the changes taking place in the countryside. The information provided will be of considerable value to researchers and will enable further monitoring and analysis to take place. It will also provide a better factual base on which to take decisions and make plans for the future.

Labour Statistics

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of job losses in each classification for each employment exchange in the city of Glasgow for each of the last eight years.

Mr. Lang: I regret that the information requested could be made available only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many jobs have been created and how many lost in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency in each year since June 1979 in the food processing industry;

(2) how many jobs have been created and how many lost in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency in each year since June 1979 in the clothing and textile industry;

(3) how many jobs have been created and how many lost in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency in each year since June 1979 in the computer construction industry;

(4) how many jobs have been created and how many lost in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency in each year since June 1979 in the construction industry;

(5) how many jobs have been created and how many lost in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency in each year since June 1979 in the distribution industry;

(6) how many jobs have been created and how many lost in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency in each year since June 1979 in the engineering industry;

(7) how many jobs have been created and how many lost in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency in each year since June 1979.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 May 1987, c. *395*]: Information on job gains and job losses in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency is not available. Information is available from the regional data system for those working in manufacturing plants with 11 or more employees in Cumbernauld new town. No reliable information is available from this source for plants with fewer than 11 employees. Figures by industry grouping from the RDS are given in the table.

It is not possible to provide figures of gross job gains and losses as to do so would disclose information relating to individual businesses. For the same reason, it is not possible to distinguish computer construction within the engineering industry or food processing from textiles and clothing.

As regards overall employment, the available information relates to Cumbernauld new town in the period 1979-87, and I would refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 13 May 1987.

	Engineering (including computers)	*Food Processing/ Clothing and Textiles*
1979-80	−240	−120
1980-81	−610	+10
1981-82	−530	−370
1982-83	+100	−110
1983-84	−200	−20
1984-85	+190	−20
1985-86	[1]	+100

[1] Figure omitted to avoid disclosure of information relating to individual businesses.

EMPLOYMENT

Job Creation

Mr. Hawksley asked the Paymaster General how many places and at what public cost were provided in 1986 in the Telford travel-to-work area for *(a)* YTS and *(b)* community schemes.

Mr. Trippier: It is not possible to provide the information in the precise form requested. The available information is shown in the table.

Telford Travel-to-Work Area[1]

1986-87[2]	
YTS	
Contracted places	1,283
Public cost (£ million)	[3]72·73
Community programme	
Filled places	903
Public cost (£ million)	[4]1·8

[1] Figures for the Telford-travel-to-work are for YTS are based on the Wrekin local authority district which includes Madeley, Wellington, Oakengates and Telford. Figures for the community programme are based on the jobcentre area which covers Bridgnorth, Madeley, Wellington and Telford.

[2] Figures are not available for calendar years, thus the financial year has been quoted.

[3] YTS is a training measure. The concept of net exchequer cost (the usual interpretation of "public cost") per filled place is not therefore appropriate. The gross cost per filled places is estimated to be £2,600 per annum. The £2·73 million public cost quoted has been obtained from an estimated average level of training.

[4] The cost of £1·8 million quoted for the community programme is the net exchequer cost of the programme. This allows for benefit saving and flowbacks of tax and payments of the Exchequer.

Self-employment

Mr. Bruce asked the Paymaster General (1) what are the actual numbers of self-employed in each constituency in the United Kingdom according to the most recent information or census;

(2) pursuant to his reply, *Official Report*, 31 March 1987, column *467* if he will list the self-employed in each constituency in the United Kingdom as a proportion of the total on the electoral roll according to the most recent information or census.

Mr. Lee: I am sending the hon. Member a copy of the information requested and will place a copy in the Library.

Community Programme

Mr. Evennett asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received concerning the funding by the Manpower Services Commission of community programme schemes in Bexley; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: I have received no representations concerning the funding by the Manpower Services Commission of community programme schemes in Bexley. The local area manpower board met on 6 March and approved the distribution of places for 1987-88.

Job Generation Ltd.

Mr. Evennett asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received concerning the withdrawal of Manpower Services Commission funds from Job Generation Ltd.; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The Job Generation Ltd. current community programme contract ends in June 1987 and the agency will not be renewed. The local MSC's community programme manager is currently seeking ways to redistribute these places amongst other providers within the Bexley area. This action should allow individual participants with a balance of time still outstanding to complete their 52 weeks on the programme.

The hon. Member wrote to me on 31 March about Job Generation Ltd.; a reply will be sent very soon.

Benefit Claimants

Dr. Cunningham asked the Paymaster General if he will give a detailed breakdown of unemployed claimants in the Copeland parliamentary constituency using the most recent figures, analysed by sex and by the age of the unemployed and the duration of unemployment.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the Library. The figures relate to the numbers of unemployed claimants on 8 January 1987, the latest date for which an analysis of unemployment by age and duration is available.

Age and Duration Analysis of the Unemployed for Statistical Date 8 January 1987

Copeland Parliamentary Constituency

Males

Duration of Unemployment in weeks	*Under 17*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*	*35-39*	*40-44*	*45-49*	*50-54*	*55-59*	*60 and over*	*Total*
One or less	4	4	1	1	19	7	4	1	1	0	1	5	4	52
Over 1 and up to 2	0	2	0	0	5	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	19
Over 2 and up to 4	4	7	1	3	26	19	8	5	4	4	2	5	1	89
Over 4 and up to 6	4	4	6	3	16	11	8	6	7	5	3	2	3	78
Over 6 and up to 8	6	2	3	5	23	15	15	7	3	4	5	1	2	91
Over 8 and up to 13	6	7	7	9	47	30	17	22	17	10	10	6	11	199
Over 13 and up to 26	15	22	28	26	109	44	31	35	27	19	14	17	13	400
Over 26 and up to 39	1	8	16	7	60	33	18	11	10	13	16	16	6	215
Over 39 and up to 52	0	3	13	10	32	22	15	21	16	11	20	14	18	195
Over 52 and up to 65	0	2	6	5	26	10	15	10	7	5	3	12	1	102
Over 65 and up to 78	0	11	7	7	27	14	7	10	9	6	12	16	2	128
Over 78 and up to 104	0	1	5	3	33	19	21	9	18	7	7	14	0	137
Over 104 and up to 156	0	0	3	7	46	42	36	30	19	20	58	81	0	342
Over 156 and up to 208	0	0	0	1	21	26	20	14	8	7	11	32	0	140
Over 208 and up to 260	0	0	0	0	20	17	17	14	11	14	12	19	0	124
Over 260	0	0	0	0	14	46	33	36	19	28	31	44	1	252
Total Males	40	73	96	87	524	358	266	234	177	154	206	285	63	2,563

Females

Duration of Unemployment in weeks	*Under 17*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*	*35-39*	*40-44*	*45-49*	*50-54*	*55-59*	*60 and over*	*Total*
One or less	1	4	3	3	7	11	0	2	4	2	5	1	0	43
Over 1 and up to 2	0	1	0	2	8	3	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	19
Over 2 and up to 4	3	2	13	9	15	6	5	5	4	1	1	2	0	66
Over 4 and up to 6	2	3	5	3	12	8	8	2	2	2	1	1	0	49
Over 6 and up to 8	1	1	2	2	15	6	9	4	5	3	4	2	0	54
Over 8 and up to 13	8	10	7	9	37	25	13	13	8	6	3	3	0	142
Over 13 and up to 26	19	19	27	23	67	52	24	19	14	10	12	11	0	297
Over 26 and up to 39	0	8	6	15	33	30	16	13	13	2	4	10	0	150
Over 39 and up to 52	1	11	5	8	31	26	19	6	8	10	6	8	0	139
Over 52 and up to 65	0	3	6	3	14	18	6	3	6	5	3	3	0	70
Over 65 and up to 78	0	4	4	4	19	10	3	6	3	6	4	9	0	72
Over 78 and up to 104	0	0	4	2	16	15	4	2	3	5	11	10	0	72
Over 104 and up to 156	0	0	1	5	15	13	9	5	3	3	10	18	0	82
Over 156 and up to 208	0	0	0	0	7	3	2	2	8	4	3	11	0	40
Over 208 and up to 260	0	0	0	0	9	2	3	1	1	2	5	4	0	27
Over 260	0	0	0	0	8	6	8	3	2	10	8	14	0	59
Total Females	35	66	83	88	313	234	130	86	85	72	80	109	0	1,381

Wages Inspectorate (Prosecutions)

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General if, pursuant to his answer of 5 May, *Official Report*, columns *333-40*, he will state how many court actions were taken by the Wages Inspectorate against employers in 1986, distinguishing between criminal prosecutions and claims for arrears, showing the number of successful actions together with the arrears assessed and the arrears paid; if he will provide a breakdown of the figures in tables 3 and 4 showing checks made on a routine basis and those arising from a complaint, distinguishing between visits and questionnaire checks; and if he will provide information showing the number of establishments found to be in breach of any obligation under the Wages Act and predecessor legislation, indicating the nature of the breach and distinguishing, as far as possible, by sector and region.

Mr. Lee: In 1986 the inspectorate took criminal prosecutions against three employers. All were successful. The total arrears assessed as due to the workers concerned was £1,996·66 and £811·94 was awarded by the courts. I understand that the sums due have not yet been paid in full in all cases. The arrangements for payment are, however, a matter for the court. No civil proceedings to recover arrears were taken by the inspectorate in 1986.

The breakdown requested of the relevant figures in tables 3 and 4 in the *Official Report* for 5 May, at columns *333-40*, is given in tables A and B respectively. Routine postal questionnaire checks were restricted to the two retail trades and hairdressing. Where the employer's reply was not satisfactory or no reply was received, a visit was carried out. Such visits are included in the figures in the tables for routine checks by visit.

Tables C and D give the information requested about the nature of breaches of wages council legislation found in 1986.

Table A—Trades covered by wages councils and results of pay checks by type of check—1986

	Workers whose pay was checked	*Workers underpaid*	*Arrears paid* £	*Arrears waived* £	*Arrears not pursued* £	*Total arrears assessed* £
Aerated waters						
Routine checks by visit	666	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	2,524	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	32	1	46	—	—	46
Totals	3,212	1	46	—	—	46
Clothing manufacture						
Routine checks by visit	12,766	355	17,182	923	3,630	21,735
Routine checks not visited	1,684	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	2,938	587	40,271	2,024	31,848	74,143
Totals	17,388	942	57,453	2,947	35,478	95,878
Boot and shoe repairing						
Routine checks by visit	428	17	2,841	474	321	3,636
Routine checks not visited	71	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	19	10	1,310	—	140	1,450
Totals	518	27	4,151	474	461	5,086
Button manufacturing						
Routine checks by visit	160	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	4	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	164	—	—	—	—	—
Coffin furniture and cerement making						
Routine checks by visit	28	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	3	1	20	—	—	20
Totals	31	1	20	—	—	20
Cotton waste reclamation						
Routine checks by visit	39	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	39	—	—	—	—	—
Flax and hemp						
Routine checks by visit	34	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	34	—	—	—	—	—

	Workers whose pay was checked	Workers underpaid	Arrears paid £	Arrears waived £	Arrears not pursued £	Total arrears assessed £
Fur						
Routine checks by visit	145	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	8	3	522	—	—	522
Totals	153	3	522	—	—	522
General waste materials reclamation						
Routine checks by visit	1,409	6	96	—	—	96
Routine checks not visited	26	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	66	9	1,051	226	212	1,489
Totals	1,501	15	1,147	226	212	1,585
Hairdressing undertakings						
Routine checks by visit	5,226	375	37,680	7,274	2,658	47,612
Routine checks not visited	153	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	2,220	739	87,140	19,966	15,469	122,575
Questionnaire checks not visited	3,950	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	11,549	1,114	124,820	27,240	18,127	170,187
Hat, Cap and Millinery						
Routine checks by visit	607	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	607	—	—	—	—	—
Lace finishing						
Routine checks by visit	22	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	1	1	43	—	—	43
Totals	23	1	43	—	—	43
Laundry						
Routine checks by visit	1,843	32	2,925	1,125	—	4,050
Routine checks not visited	512	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	122	34	2,758	—	4,481	7,239
Totals	2,477	66	5,683	1,125	4,481	11,289
Linen and Cotton Handkerchief						
Routine checks by visit	154	1	15	—	—	15
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	37	9	600	—	—	600
Totals	191	10	615	—	—	615
Made-up Textiles						
Routine checks by visit	463	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	4	2	157	—	—	157
Totals	467	2	157	—	—	157
Ostrich and fancy feather						
Routine checks by visit	192	1	48	—	—	48
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	192	1	48	—	—	48
Perambulator and invalid carriage						
Routine checks by visit	127	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	127	—	—	—	—	—
Retail bespoke tailoring						
Routine checks by visit	161	3	348	—	—	348

	Workers whose pay was checked	*Workers underpaid*	*Arrears paid* £	*Arrears waived* £	*Arrears not pursued* £	*Total arrears assessed* £
Routine checks not visited	13	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	16	7	2,002	—	136	2,138
Totals	190	10	2,350	—	136	2,486
Rope, twine and net						
Routine checks by visit	189	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	189	—	—	—	—	—
Sack and bag						
Routine checks by visit	48	—	—	—	—	—
Routine checks not visited	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	4	4	263	—	—	263
Totals	52	4	263	—	—	263
Toy manufacturing						
Routine checks by visit	492	6	201	—	—	201
Routine checks not visited	29	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	23	17	615	—	301	916
Totals	544	23	816	—	301	1,117
Retail non-food trades						
Routine checks by visit	16,452	1,729	173,018	62,827	34,131	269,976
Routine checks not visited	33,157	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	2,522	1,053	188,282	36,829	49,835	274,946
Questionnaire checks not visited	6,247	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	58,378	2,782	361,300	99,656	83,966	544,922
Retail food and allied trades						
Routine checks by visit	17,100	2,628	201,277	101,169	22,160	324,606
Routine checks not visited	30,947	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	3,431	1,657	222,525	49,750	77,532	349,807
Questionnaire checks not visited	6,803	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	58,281	4,285	423,802	150,919	99,692	674,413
Licensed non-residential						
Routine checks by visit	27,273	1,665	117,602	34,415	12,783	164,800
Routine checks not visited	17,564	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	3,861	991	152,378	18,495	33,622	204,495
Totals	48,698	2,656	269,980	52,910	46,405	369,295
Licensed residential and restaurant						
Routine checks by visit	20,397	731	52,131	24,301	9,978	86,410
Routine checks not visited	18,706	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	10,354	1,639	174,864	9,041	29,953	213,858
Totals	49,457	2,370	226,995	33,342	39,931	300,268
Unlicensed place of refreshment						
Routine checks by visit	6,028	678	49,571	30,558	6,545	86,674
Routine checks not visited	9,765	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	1,256	542	58,653	8,304	13,271	80,228
Totals	17,049	1,220	108,224	38,862	19,816	166,902
Great Britain						
Routine checks by visit	112,439	8,227	654,935	263,066	92,206	1,010,207
Routine checks not visited	115,151	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints	26,921	7,306	933,500	144,635	256,800	1,334,935
Questionnaire checks not visited	17,000	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	271,511	15,533	1,588,435	407,701	349,006	2,345,142

TVEI (Welsh Language)

Mr. Wigley asked the Paymaster General whether his Department was consulted concerning the Welsh Joint Education Committee's application to the Manpower Services Comission for a four-year £1 million Welsh-medium technical, vocational and educational initiative project in 1986.

Mr. Lee: No. Individual applications for assistance under the technical and vocational education initiative are dealt with by the Manpower Services Commission rather than by my Department.

Fashion Services for the Disabled

Mr. Madden asked the Paymaster General if the Manpower Services Commission will provide long-term funding for Fashion Services for the Disabled, which provides help to disabled people within Bradford; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Fashion Services for the Disabled is funded under the community programme at present. Projects supported under this programme are appraised annually both by the Manpower Services Commission and the local area manpower board to ensure that those which continue to receive support are the ones which best meet the needs of local long-term unemployed people as well as providing benefit to the community. Both the Manpower Services Commission and Bradford area manpower board felt the Fashion Services for the Disabled project no longer meets the needs of local long-term unemployed people and there are, therefore, no plans to renew it when its current contract ends in August 1987.

"Action for Cities"

Dr. Owen asked the Paymaster General how much it cost to produce the booklet "Action for Cities"; how many copies have been printed; and at what cost.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The booklet "Action for Cities" was produced jointly by my Department and that of my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction. The total cost of production was £32,800, of which the cost of printing 25,000 copies was £25,600. These costs have been shared equally between the Department of Employment and the Department of the Environment.

This is a minute proportion of the public expenditure on the Government programmes which the booklet explains in order to improve take-up of and participation in these programmes.

YTS

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General if he will update the answer to the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) *Official Report*, column 12, of 8 April 1986, regarding accidents to YTS trainees, to the latest available date.

Mr. Lee: The tables provide YTS accident figures for fatalities and major injuries for the latest available quarterly periods. Table *(a)* gives figures for the quarter 1 January 1986 to 31 March 1986. Table *(b)* gives figures for the quarters 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987. It should be noted that the two tables cannot be directly compared in respect of major injuries. Up to 31 March 1986 major injuries were classified according to the severity criteria laid down in the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1980. From 1 April 1986 major injuries are classified according to the severity criteria laid down in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985. This has had the effect of reclassifying some accidents from the minor category into the major category.

YTS Accidents 1 January 1986 to 31 March 1987

Period	*Average No. in Training*	*Fatalities*	[1]*Accidents Major*	*Minor*
Table *(a)*				
1 January 1986 to 31 March 1986	[3]273,553	nil	60	375
Table *(b)*				
1 April 1986 to 30 June 1986	[3]261,532	[2]3	68	375
1 July 1986 to 30 September 1986	[3]334,927	nil	77	266
1 October 1986 to 31 December 1986	[3]346,400	4	100	509
1 January 1987 to 31 March 1987	[3]318,219	2	70	578

[1] MSC accident figures for YTS have been compiled on a similar basis to those prepared by the Health and Safety Executive on employed persons. However, the MSC's figures will include a number of accidents during scheme time and accidents to trainees in educational establishments which may not have been reportable to the Health and Safety Executive had the individuals been employed.

[2] Each of these figures includes one road traffic accident.

[3] These figures are provisional and will be subject to change as further information becomes available.

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General if he will list the provider, and the numbers of places offered, of each two-year YTS scheme in Coventry.

Mr. Lee: A list of YTS providers in the Coventry local authority district and the number of places offered by each is as follows:

Provider	*Places offered*
Alvis Ltd.	10
Armstrong Engineering	12
Coventry Area Health Authority	33
Coventry Chamber of Commerce	320
Coventry City Council (clerical)	60
Coventry City Council (construction)	30
Coventry and District Co-operative Society	26

DEFECTIVE P

Provider	*Places offered*
Coventry City Education Department	480
Coventry and Warwickshire Awards Trust[1]	25
Coventry Small Business Training Scheme	12
Courtaulds plc	18
Dunlop Ltd.	55
GEC Ltd.	90
Guy Associates	56
Hotel and Catering Training Board	52
Jaguar Cars Ltd.	20
JHP Training[1]	172
Lloyds British Training Services Ltd.	98
Massey Ferguson Ltd.	24
MGTS Training Services Ltd.	268
Midland Link	106
National Association for the Care and Settlement of Offenders—Coventry	30
Rolls Royce Ltd.	24
Peugeot Talbot plc	49
Tetra Incorporated	100
Wickman Bennet	6
Post Office	31
East Midlands Butchery	30
Total	2,237

[1] Some of these places will be provided in Warwickshire.

The following list shows providers whose schemes in Coventry and Warwickshire are administered by the Manpower Services Commission large companies unit. It is not possible to separately identify schemes operating in Coventry.

Provider	*Places Offered*
Abbey National Building Society PLC	1
Association of British Travel Agents	12
Association of Merchants in Trading	9
ARROW Training Associates	5
Austin Rover Group Ltd.	41
British Association of Professional Hairdressing Employers	10
British Federation Home Care Providers	4
British Holiday Homes and Parks Association	3
British Home Stores PLC	6
Builders Merchants Federation	19
Boots Company PLC	6
British Office Systems and Stationery Federation	3
British Printing Industry Federation	16
British Retail Florists Association	10
Burgess	4
Burton Group PLC	7
C and A Modes	2
Clothing and Allied Products Industry Training Board	27
Construction Industry Training Board	320
Debenhams PLC	20
Department of Employment	10
D.E.R.	1
De Vere Hotels Ltd.	13
Dewhurst	7
Dixons Group PLC	4
Electricity Council	3
Electronic Rentals	3
Essanelle	4
Essex Leisure	1
E. W. Holdings Ltd.	1
Federation of Bakers	1
Footballers Association Further Education and Vocational Training Society Ltd.	12
Ford Motor Company	2
Fosters Menswear	4
Gateway Food Markets Ltd.	6
GKN	1
Glass Training Ltd.	2
Granada Television Rentals	4
Habitat	2
Halifax Building Society	2
Home Charm Group PLC	18
IBM	8
Lunn Poly	8
Motor Agents Association	50
Marks and Spencer PLC	5
Midland Bank PLC	8
Mothercare Ltd.	4
National Institute of Hardware	3
National Pony Society	3
Owen, Owen	10
Partco	11
Plastics Processing Industry Training Board	4
Remploy	5
Rumbelows	5
J. Sainsbury PLC	13
Scaffolding GB	1
Shoe Repair Industry Training Board	4
W. H. Smith Do it All	1
Standard Tyre & Exhaust Ltd.	4
Stylo Barrett	4
Tesco Stores Ltd.	20
Trust House Forte	5
Threshold	20
Timpson Shoes	3
Timpson Shoe repairs	1
Trustee Savings Bank PLC	2
Timber Trades Training Association	6
Wolsely Centres Ltd.	2
F. W. Woolworth PLC	4
Yorkshire Bank PLC	1
Total	845

Personal Incomes

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General what proportion of the population eligible for employment have an income below *(a)* £80, *(b)* £100 and *(c)* £120 per week.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The term "eligible for employment" does not have a sufficiently precise meaning to enable me to answer the hon. Member's question.

Minimum Earnings

Mr. Bellingham asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the Council of Europe's decency threshold in relation to minimum levels of earnings.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: There is no such thing as a Council of Europe threshold for a minimum acceptable level of earnings. None has ever been endorsed either by any member state of the Council of Europe or by its Governmental Committee on the European Social Charter. Nor does the Charter refer to a percentage of average earnings which should be regarded as an acceptable minimum. Proposals frequently made by the Low Pay Unit and others for a wage minimum of 68 per cent. or any other percentage of average earnings do not therefore carry the authority of the Council of Europe or its members.

In my opinion, all such proposals for a statutory minimum wage in this country would have the effect of raising the level of unemployment.

RINTING

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

Dr. Michael Clark asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received regarding the quality and quantity of staff employed by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *27*]: The Select Committee on Energy, in its Second Report published last month, recommended that urgent attention be given "to ensuring that the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate can recruit and retain sufficient staff of sufficient quality to discharge all its responsibilities". I have had discussions with the chairman of the Health and Safety Commission, Her Majesty's chief inspector of nuclear installations and officials of the Health and Safety Executive concerning recruitment matters for the inspectorate. I have received no other representations on these matters during the last six months.

The Health and Safety Commission will shortly launch a recruitment campaign for the inspectorate on the basis of increased salaries.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Butter

Dame Peggy Fenner asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current level of butter stocks in intervention storage following the recent distribution of butter.

Mr. Gummer: The free food scheme, under which 13,623 tonnes of butter were released to charitable organisations, ended on 31 March 1987 when intervention stocks amounted to 222,810 tonnes.

Income Maintenance Scheme

Mr. Wigley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will now introduce an income maintenance scheme to guarantee to those farmers affected by radiation from the Chernobyl disaster that their level of income will be sustained at a level equivalent, in real terms, to their average income of the three years prior to the Chernobyl disaster, and that this will be guaranteed for however long their farming is affected by radiation consequences of Chernobyl.

Mr. Gummer: In full consultation with the farmers' unions, the Government introduced three compensation schemes to assist sheep producers whose enterprises have suffered disruption from the movement and slaughter restrictions introduced in the wake of the Chernobyl incident. These schemes covered losses of variable premium and market price on lambs; losses in market price on all sheep which needed to be marked under the release scheme; and a third element, in the form of a headage payment, to assist in meeting the extra costs incurred by producers in retaining sheep on farms beyond their normal marketing dates. The second of these schemes, which is still in operation and has no termination date, was modified recently to provide for individual lot valuations.

As a further step, we expect to be announcing shortly details of an additional compensation scheme reflecting the extra costs of handling sheep prior to release from the restricted areas.

These arrangements, and our efforts to ensure that producers' husbandry and marketing patterns are disrupted as little as possible, mean that a further scheme to guarantee returns at historic levels would be inappropriate.

Food Research

Mr. Shersby asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish in the *Official Report*, in tabular form, details of all food research projects currently being sponsored by his Department giving details of the amount being spent on each project, the location at which the work is being undertaken and the name of the principal researchers involved.

Mr. Jopling: The number of food research projects commissioned by my Ministry is of the order of several hundreds. Compilation of the comprehensive details requested requires the expenditure of considerable resources. Furthermore, many of the projects for the current financial year have not yet been finalised so that for these projects, all of the required information is not yet available.

In the meantime, I have arranged for the Commission review report on food safety, containing (in appendix 2) the national programme of food research and development, published in 1985, to be placed in the Library of the House. This contains much of the information requested for the years 1984-85. We expect to publish the revised programme updated for the year 1986-87 later this year.

Nurseries

Mr. Colin Shepherd asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress has been made towards the introduction of an approval scheme for nurseries.

Mr. Jopling: I am pleased to announce the introduction with effect from 1 July of a voluntary scheme under which nurseries which maintain high standards will be able to qualify for approval by the Ministry. The scheme is directed at enterprises which produce plants (toher than vegetables) or bulbs for export. I hope that it can be developed so that approved premises would in future be subject ot less intensive pre-export inspections. This would mean that lower charges would apply to the inspection of plants and bulbs grown on approved premises. The scope for reduced inspections will be considered in the late summer with a view to operating differential charges early in 1988 if the scheme proves practicable and effective.

Approval will be given only to enterprises which meet very high standards of plant health, hygiene and management. The assessment of enterprises which apply for approval will cover pest and disease control, soil and crop management, facilities, management structure, tidiness and hygiene.

A fee of £50 will be payable on application for approval under the scheme: the fee for growers registered in the Ministry's plant health propagation scheme will be £25.

The Ministry's plant health and seeds inspectors will shortly be in contact with all exporters of bulbs and plants and will provide a leaflet explaining how the new scheme will operate.

Milk Quotas

Mr. Nicholas Baker asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the transfer of milk quotas.

Mr. Jopling: I am aware of the concern being expressed about the operation of certain aspects for the rules for the transfer of milk quota with land. A number of difficult legal and practical questions have been raised and my colleagues and I have concluded that it would be appropriate to examine these fully with all those concerned before deciding on any possible solutions. A consultation paper will be issued this week discussing the issues involved and inviting comment from interested organisations. A copy will be placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Regional Organisation

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a further statement about the recent review which examined his Department's regional organisation.

Mr. Jopling: I announced in a written reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) on 2 February that I was considering a report on a review of my Department's regional organisation.

Since then, I have received representations about the report from a number of right hon. and hon. Members, from my regional panel chairmen, the main organisations representing the farming industry, local authorities and their associations, and a range of other interested organisations and individuals. The staff of my Department have also been fully consulted and have made their views known.

I have carefully considered the report and all the views put forward. I accept that there would be serious disadvantages in changing the Ministry's network of regional and divisional offices. It would entail disruption for the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service at a time when it needs a settled background against which to establish its new commercial method of operating. It is also difficult at present to judge the impact on the work of my staff in the regions of recent and prospective, national and Community, decisions on agricultural policy, the rural economy and protection of the environment. I have therefore decided to maintain the existing network of five regional and 19 divisional offices.

Nevertheless, adjustments need to be made to take account of substantial changes in the distribution of work. I have therefore decided that there should be some reduction in staffing to match current needs.

I have further decided that, with the aim of improving efficiency, management of the regional organisation should be unified under five regional directors, whilst maintaining the state veterinary service under central management by the Chief Veterinary Officer. Appropriate changes will also be made in headquarters management structure.

Finally, internal procedures are to be changed to involve professional staff of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service more closely in the management of its support staff.

These changes are to be introduced by stages, starting later this year. They will ensure the Ministry can fulfil the complete range of its responsibilities in the regions with increased efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Milk Producers

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures are available to help milk producers the fat content of whose milk was abnormally low in 1985-86 and who as a result face a disproportionate penalty under the milk quota system.

Mr. Jopling: The milk quota rules on penalties for increases in butterfat which came into effect last October introduced a fixed base year of 1985-86. This created particular difficulty for producers whose fat content had been unusually low that year. I am pleased to say that following our representations the European Commission has recognised this problem and has now made provision for member states to allow an alternative prior base year in cases where the fat content was affected by an exceptional event. I believe this will be of very considerable assistance to many milk producers. We are discussing the implementation of this measure with the industry and full details will be announced in due course.

Children's Food

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what definition of young children he now uses when considering requirements relating to foods sold as being suitable for young children.

Mr. Donald Thompson [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *566*]: The Food Labelling Regulations 1984 include special provisions for foods indicating that they are either suitable or specially prepared for babies or young children. The proposals that I have recently circulated to amend the Colouring in Food Regulations 1973 would prohibit the use of colours, with three exceptions, in food specially prepared for babies or young children. In neither case is any definition of young children included; an indication of the intended consumers is sufficient to attract these specific provisions.

Marginal Areas

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to support farming in marginal areas.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *565*]: The Government have offered substantial support to farmers in the marginal lands through special measures in their designated less favoured areas. These were extended by 1·2 million hectares (14 per cent.) in 1984 and as a result 36,000 additional holdings became eligible for special benefits. These include hill livestock compensatory allowances, enhanced rates of capital grants, grants for craft and tourism projects (since 1985) and special support for Scottish crofters.

Expenditure on the additional less favoured areas support since 1979 has been:

	£ million
1979-80	111·4
1980-81	113·5
1981-82	102·8
1982-83	119·6
1983-84	123·5
1984-85	129·7
1985-86	137·9
1986-87	140·9

(Figures are taken from Annual Reviews of Agriculture 1984 to 1987.)

In addition, an exceptional weather aid worth £16·7 million was paid to many livestock producers in the less favoured areas in 1985.

Other Government measures have also been of particular assistance to farmers in less favoured areas. The wool guarantee has increased in the period from 115p/kg to 129p/kg which has helped producers develop wool quality. This has increased British wool exports notably to Japan where our exports have risen from £870,000 in 1980 to £8·5 million in 1985. The environmentally sensitive areas scheme which I have introduced is of particular value to marginal farmers since it helps to protect some areas of traditional, less intensive farming. I announced in February that the funding devoted to this scheme was to be doubled as part of a package of measures to encourage alternative land use and increase diversity on farms. These measures will provide further useful opportunities for those in marginal areas and include a new farm woodland scheme; grants for on-farm diversification and more emphasis on novel crops and livestock in our research development and advisory programmes.

Fishing

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to support the British fishing industry.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply, 8 May 1987, c. 364*]: Agreement on the common fisheries policy (CFP) in January 1983 was a major achievement which was welcomed by the United Kingdom industry because of the stability it provides and because it allows the industry to plan future activities with increasing confidence. It was particularly welcome as it marked the close of a period of instability due largely to reduced distant water opportunities following the establishment of 200-mile fisheries limits.

The agreement, which reflects a delicate balance of interests, includes satisfactory provisions on access to coastal waters and the Shetland box, allocation of national quotas, technical conservation measures and the Community's control and enforcement regime.

In April 1985 the negotiations between the Community of Ten and two applicant countries, Spain and Portugal, on the terms of their accession to the Community on 1 January 1986, were concluded on a basis which, while being fair to the new member states, fully preserved United Kingdom fishing interests and the existing balance of the CFP.

Under the United Kingdom presidency of the Fisheries Council from July to December 1986 we secured the full-scale revision of the regulation on technical conservation measures. Agreement was reached on a staged increase in the minimum mesh size for the North sea to 90mm by 1989, on retention of the mesh size derogation for vessels below 300 bhp fishing for sole, on improvements in the rules governing beam trawling within the 12-mile inshore zone (including the reintroduction of an 8m aggregate beam length) and on the maintenance of the key restrictions on industrial fisheries.

Substantial improvements were also made under the United Kingdom presidency to the Community's control and enforcement arrangements including increased powers for Community inspectors, tighter control of over-fishing and, for the first time, we have established the principle that a member state which over-fishes its national quota to the extent that other member states are prevented from fully taking theirs, will now be required to compensate the disadvantaged member states, thus providing a real incentive not to over-fish.

In each of the last three years we have managed to secure agreement on the TACs and quotas for the year ahead before the actual start of the fishing year and in 1986, under the United Kingdom presidency, we also negotiated a long-term agreement with Norway on the share out of North sea herring, an issue which has caused major problems in the past.

On the market support side, a revised regime was introduced in 1983 which provides a system of degressive compensation, by which fishermen's co-operatives are eligible for partial reimbursement from FEOGA of losses made on the sale of the main species of fish. In addition, there is provision for private storage subsidies and import duties. In 1986 the EC budget for fisheries was 41 mecu. Domestic regulations have been introduced to back up Community requirements for the grading of a wide range of fish species according to size and quality.

A number of measures have been taken to improve the protection of the marine environment. These include the enactment of part II of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, which has introduced more comprehensive controls over the disposal of waste at sea; the introduction last year of a new liquid discharge authorisation for BNFL Sellafield, which embodied a further tightening of controls to ensure the continued reduction of levels of radioactivity released to the Irish sea; and the bringing forward of provisions to regulate the use of anti-fouling paints containing tributyl tin (TBT) in the aquatic environment. At the same time, the scientific and other resources in my Department devoted to the protection of the aquatic environment from pollution have been increased.

In 1980-82 the Government provided special financial assistance to the fishing industry in a period of uncertainty prior to the agreement of the CFP in 1983. Under the fishing vessels temporary support scheme some £55 million in aid was given to the industry.

In 1983 we were the first member state to implement the Community fisheries structures package through the Fishing Vessels (Financial Assistance) Scheme 1983 which provided grants for the decommissioning and laying-up of vessels, exploratory voyages and joint ventures — together with aids for building and modernisidg vessels. These measures expired at the end of December 1986 and a new system of financial support for the sea fisheries industry was agreed by the Council of Fisheries Ministers on 3-4 December 1986. This was a Council regulation covering the first five years of a 10-year programme for the modernisation and adaptation of the fishing fleet: modernisation of port facilities, promotion of some fish species and the development of fish farming. The Community financial provision up to 1991 is 800 mecu (£500 million. Arrangements are in hand to lay before Parliament draft orders to implement the main provisions of this Community regulation.

A new commercial strategy for Torry research station was introduced in 1985 under which the station was set an annual receipts target of £400,000 by the end of the third year.

The Sea Fish Industry Authority's five-year sea fish industry development programme (1984-89) is promoting the consumption and marketing of fish. The Government have already paid £8 million towards the first three years of this programme and a further £4 million has now been allocated for the final two years.

More recently at the Council of EC Fisheries Ministers on 5 May, we achieved a generous cod quota for 1987 of 2,700 tonnes at Spitzbergen and 850 tonnes in the important fishing grounds of the north-west Atlantic.

ENERGY

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) whether the Government's post-Chernobyl review of emergency plans and procedures for British nuclear power stations will examine the size of emergency planning zones; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when he expects the results of the Government's post-Chernobyl review of emergency plans and procedures for British nuclear power stations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 22 April, columns *547-551*. Work on the review is continuing.

Energy Research

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of resources directed to research in the fields of energy were allocated to nuclear and to non-nuclear matters, respectively, in the last two years; and which are expected to be so allocated in each year to 1989.

Mr. Goodlad: Department of Energy expenditure on non-nuclear research and development from 1974 to 1979 amounted to £61 million. From 1979 to 1987 it has amounted to £372 million. Comparisons with research and development expenditure on nuclear power which supplies over a fifth of our electricity would not be meaningful.

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the amount and the proportion of the resources devoted to energy research which has been or will be provided for coal technology, energy efficiency, renewable resources to matters relating to onshore and offshore oil and gas; how spending on those matters compares with that devoted to research relating to nuclear waste disposal over the period 1980 to 1987; and what figures are projected for 1987-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: The figures for the years 1974-79 are as follows:

Department of Energy: Breakdown of RD & D Expenditure 1974-1979

	£ millions (per centage share)					
	1974-75	*1975-76*	*1976-77*	*1977-78*	*1978-79*	*Total*
Non-nuclear						
Coal	—	—	0·3 (2·7)	1·9 (10·4)	0·5 (2·4)	2·7
Energy Efficiency Renewables	—	0·5 (7·2)	1·0 (9·0)	2·5 (13·7)	3·6 (17·3)	7·6
Oil and gas production Oilfield delineation and safety	4·0 (100)	6·4 (92·8)	9·8 (88·3)	13·9 (75·9)	16·7 (80·3)	50·8
Total non-nuclear	4·0 (100)	6·9 (100)	11·1 (100)	18·3 (100)	20·8 (100)	61·1
Government expenditure on nuclear waste disposal R & D (includes estimated expenditure by D. Energy/UKAEA, DoE, MAFF)	1·9	2·9	3·6	4·5	6·5	19·4

The figures for 1979-87 are as follows:

Department of Energy: breakdown of RD&D expenditure 1980-88

£ million (per. cent share)

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87 (est.)*	*1987-88 (plan)*	*Total*
Non-Nuclear										
Coal	1·8 (6·2)	2·7 (8·1)	4·6 (10·0)	3·0 (7·5)	3·0 (7·5)	0·7 (1·7)	0·6 (1·3)	1·6 (3·5)	1·2 (2·3)	19·2
Energy efficiency	8·2 (28·4)	1·4 (4·2)	4·1 (8·9)	6·8 (16·9)	7·0 (17·5)	6·6 (16·2)	8·4 (18·5)	9·0 (19·6)	12·1 (23·3)	169·6
Renewables		11·2 (33·7)	17·3 (37·5)	14·2 (35·3)	11·3 (28·2)	14·0 (34·3)	12·7 (28·0)	11·6 (25·3)	13·7 (26·4)	
Oil and Gas production	18·9 (65·4)	3·7 (11·2)	4·3 (9·3)	3·2 (8·0)	4·5 (11·2)	4·4 (10·8)	5·7 (12·6)	4·6 (10·0)	6·2 (11·9)	183·5
Oilfield delineation and safety		14·2 (42·8)	15·8 (34·3)	13·0 (32·3)	14·2 (35·6)	15·1 (37·0)	18·0 (39·6)	19·0 (41·5)	18·7 (36·1)	
Total non-nuclear	28·9 (100)	33·2 (100)	46·1 (100)	40·2 (100)	40·0 (100)	40·8 (100)	45·4 (100)	45·8 (100)	51·9 (100)	372·3
Government expenditure on nuclear waste disposal R&D[1]	9·5	16·9	15·5	17·0	13·3	13·8	13·1	15·1	18·0	132·2

[1] includes expenditure by Department of Energy, UKAEA, DoE, MAFF

Coastal Erosion

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to his reply of 11 May, *Official Report*, column 2, to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill, his Deprtment will initiate studies into the longer-term effects of North sea oil production operations on coastal erosion and the sea bed.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: North Sea oil and gas production operations have no appreciable effects on the processes of erosion of the coastal zone and sea bed. My Department has no plans to initiate any such studies.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sampson Report

5. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent assessment he has made of the possibility of publishing in part or whole the Sampson report in relation to the conduct of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Mr. Tom King: As I have already informed the House, I shall make a statement to Parliament at the earliest appropriate time on any aspects of the report that fall within my responsibility. In keeping with the normal practice in these matters, the report will not be published.

Employment (Non-discrimination)

8. **Mr. Duffy** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to end discrimination in employment against Catholics in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: Religious discrimination in employment is illegal in Northern Ireland and we are determined that it should be eliminated. Proposals to strengthen existing laws and institutions were published last September in a consultative paper, "Equality of Opportunity in Employment in Northern Ireland". We are now considering the many comments received on this document, with a view to legislation and any other necessary action.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

13. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to discuss the Anglo-Irish Agreement with representatives of the Government of the Republic of Ireland in the light of recent sectarian killings.

Mr. Tom King: We intend to discuss security matters at the next meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference, as the joint statement issued after the last meeting records.

Housing (Southern Region)

15. **Mr. Mallon** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive about new housing programmes in the southern region.

Mr. Needham: None. As indicated in my reply to the hon. Member's question on 8 April, at columns 247-48, the distribution of resources to its regions within agreed objectives and priorities is a matter for the Housing Executive. However, I keep in close touch with the chairman on broader policy issues.

Security

19. **Mr. Archer** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current security situation in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the right hon. and learned Member to the answer I gave to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) earlier today.

Political Discussions

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his most recent political discussions in the Province.

Mr. Tom King: In recent weeks I have had meetings with the Alliance party, the Social Democratic and Labour party, and the Workers party. I regret that the Unionist parties have not yet taken up the offers which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and I have made to hold discussions with them. The meetings that I have held have provided a valuable opportunity for constructive discussion of a range of issues which are important to Northern Ireland's future.

Listening Device, Middletown

Mr. A. Cecil Walker asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his answer of 13 March, *Official Report*, columns 309-10 when the listening device was found in the Republic of Ireland close to Middletown security base.

Mr. Scott: I understand that the device was found on 31 December 1986.

Republic of Ireland (Meetings)

Mr. Canavan asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what subjects were discussed at his last meeting with representatives of the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: I last met Irish Ministers at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on 22 April. We discussed security co-operation and measures aimed at promoting equality of opportunity in employment. Details are set out in the joint statement issued after the meeting. A copy has been placed in the Library.

Scheduled Offences

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were charged with scheduled offences in Northern Ireland in the first six months of 1986 and in the second half of 1986.

Mr. Scott: A total of 368 persons were charged with scheduled offences in the first half of 1986, and 287 in the second half.

Stolen Weapons

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many weapons were stolen in Northern Ireland in 1986; if he will indicate whether these were stolen from the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Ulster Defence Regiment, the Army or private citizens; and if he will provide a breakdown according to whether the weapons were bullet-firing, shotguns, air weapons, etc.

Mr. Scott: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Stolen Vehicles

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list, by Royal Ulster Constabulary division, the number of vehicles stolen in Northern Ireland in 1986, the number of stolen vehicles recovered and the number of persons proceeded against for offences related to taking vehicles without their owner's consent;

(2) how many fatal casualties there were in 1986 arising from incidents where security forces in Northern Ireland opened fire on vehicles taken without their owner's consent.

Mr. Scott: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Royal Ulster Constabulary

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give details of the manpower strength of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, and its reserve, as between full-time, part-time, male and female, operatives as at 31 December 1986.

Mr. Scott: The information is as follows:

Strength of RUC and RUC Reserve as at 31 December 1986

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
RUC	7,581	653	8,234
RUC Reserve			
Full Time	2,754	—	2,754
Part Time	1,373	287	1,660

Blocked Streams, Ballywater

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the result of the investigation into blocked and overgrown streams at lands at 52 Dunover road, Whitechurch, Ballywater, Co. Down; and what maintenance has been undertaken as promised in his letter of 14 October 1986.

Mr. Viggers: The watercourse was inspected on 23 October 1986. Although one stretch was badly overgrown the blockage was minor. The riparian was advised and asked to clear the blockage. Re-inspection on 2 December 1986 showed that the blockage had been removed and that the watercourse was flowing freely.

Planning Appeals

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why there has been a delay in implementing the decisions of the Planning Appeals Commission in relation to applications A157/1986 and A212/1986; when he implemented these decisions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: Decisions have not yet been made by the Planning Appeals Commission in relation to applications for listed building consent A157/1986 and A212/1986. The appeal hearing in respect of these applications has been fixed for 27 May 1987.

Security Forces (Firearms Offences)

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list separately for the Royal Ulster Constabulary reserves, the Ulster Defence Regiment and the Army, the number of members and ex-members of these forces charged with and the number convicted of, scheduled offences committed, or allegedly committed, by members of the security forces while using firearms for each years since 1969.

Mr. Scott: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Land Reclamation

Miss Maynard asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will state the total expenditure by way of grant-aid on land reclamation in the Province, the area of land which has been reclaimed, and the number of farmers or landowners who have benefited, in respect of each of the years 1980 to 1986, under each of the following schemes: (1) the farm capital grant scheme, (2) the farm and horticulture development scheme, (3) the agricultural and horticultural grant scheme, (4) the agricultural and horticultural development scheme, and (5) the agriculture improvement scheme (EC).

Mr. Viggers [*pursuant to his reply, 11 May 1987, c. 27*]: The expenditure per scheme (where appropriate) for the financial years 1980-81 to 1985-86 inclusive is:

Year and scheme	*Number of payments*	*Grant paid*
1980-81		
Farm and Horticulture Development	341	108,314
Agricultural and Horticultural Development	—	—
Farm Capital Grant	2,957	1,112,271
Agricultural and Horticultural Grant	3	1,526
TOTAL	3,301	1,222,111
1981-82		
Farm and Horticulture Development	391	161,380
Agricultural and Horticultural Development	—	—
Farm Capital Grant	2,178	781,111
Agricultural and Horticultural Grant	456	190,192
TOTAL	3,025	1,132,683

Year and scheme	*Number of payments*	*Grant paid*
1982-83		
Farm and Horticulture Development	613	289,213
Agricultural and Horticultural Development	10	11,445
Farm Capital Grant	1,333	487,548
Agricultural and Horticultural Grant	1,149	349,551
TOTAL	3,105	1,137,757
1983-84		
Farm and Horticulture Development	456	192,449
Agricultural and Horticultural Development	21	15,838
Farm Capital Grant	606	203,872
Agricultural and Horticultural Grant	1,534	347,453
TOTAL	2,617	759,612
1984-85		
Farm and Horticulture Development	363	178,516
Agricultural and Horticultural Development	60	45,061
Farm Capital Grant	294	101,059
Agricultural and Horticultural Grant	1,898	748,914
TOTAL	2,615	1,073,550
1985-86		
Farm and Horticulture Development	184	60,419
Agricultural and Horticultural Development	101	80,373
Farm Capital Grant	11	4,490
Agricultural and Horticultural Grant	1,256	954,639
TOTAL	1,552	1,099,921

The area of land which has been reclaimed and the number of farmers or landowners who have benefited could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. The above table gives the number of payments, which will exceed the number of individual beneficiaries as farmers may submit a number of claims per item of expenditure.

Computers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of word processing hardware and software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 May 1987]: The companies are as follows but for reasons of commercial confidentiality the value of individual contracts is not disclosed.

AES
Digital Equipment Co. Ltd.
ICL
McDonnell Douglas Information Systems Ltd.
Rank Xerox
Wang
Wordplex

In addition the Northern Ireland Office has obtained an office automation and electronic mail system from Wang which includes word processing facilities.

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has spent on *(a)* word processing hardware and *(b)* word processing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 May 1987]: Separate figures for hardware and software are not available as in all major instances word processing systems have been purchased as integrated packages. The following figures are in respect of dedicated word processing systems:

	£K
1984-85	325
1985-86	438
1986-87	543
1987-88	341·5
1988-89	357

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those companies to which his Department has awarded contracts for the supply of desk top publishing hardware and desk top publishing software in each year since 1984; and what was the value of each contract.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 May 1987]: The information is as follows but for reasons of commercial confidentiality the value of individual contracts is not disclosed:

Rank Xerox

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has spent on *(a)* desk top publishing hardward and *(b)* desk top publishing software in each year since 1984; and what is projected expenditure for financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 May 1987]: The information is as follows:

£K

	1984-85	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Desk Top Publishing Hardware	—	—	8	21·5	7·5
Desk Top Publishing Software	—	—	1·5	2·5	2·5

TRANSPORT

Channel Tunnel

Mr. McTaggart asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will discuss with the chairman of British Rail improving the frequency of direct passenger and freight trains between Scotland and the continent, to achieve optimum benefits for Scotland from the Channel tunnel link.

Mr. David Mitchell: British Rail are already fully alive to the commercial opportunities opened up by the Channel tunnel to expand through rail services to the Continent from all areas of Great Britain. A new clause requiring BR to plan for the dispersal of tunnel rail services to various parts of the country has now been added to the Channel Tunnel Bill in another place.

Coaches (Westminster Bridge)

Mr. Higgins asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he proposes to take in the interests of road safety to prevent coaches discharging their passengers into the middle of the road on Westminster bridge.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Traffic regulation measures are a matter for Lambeth borough council and Westminster city council; enforcement is a matter for the Metropolitan police. The Department is encouraging the adoption of a code of practice prepared by the Bus and Coach Council, which covers among other things arrangements for picking up and setting down passengers.

Heathrow Airport (Aircraft Altitudes)

Mr. Higgins asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the maximum height at which Boeing 747 aircraft landing at Heathrow airport can approach at distances of *(a)* 18 and *(b)* 25 miles; and what minimum height is specified by the appropriate authority.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Minimum heights at which aircraft generally may fly are specified in rules 5 and 25 of the rules of the Air and Air Traffic Control Regulations 1985 (Statutory Instrument No. 1985/1714). I have arranged for copies of these rules to be placed in the Library. Subject to the rules, the heights of aircraft approaching Heathrow are the responsibility of the National Air Traffic Services. NATS' air traffic controllers allocate heights taking into account safety, efficient use of airspace and aircraft performance capability. Generally, aircraft will follow a continuous descent path from cruising altitudes and could be expected to be at an altitude of approximately *(a)* 5,000 ft at 18 miles distance and *(b)* 7,000 ft at 25 miles distance.

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the members of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, giving their occupations and the area of the country in which they reside.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The names and occupations of the members of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee are as follows. Details of the areas in which the members reside is not generally held by the Department.

Sir Peter Baldwin KCB
    Chairman, South East Thames Regional Health Authority.
Peter Large Esq. MBE
    Chairman, Joint Committee on Mobility for the Disabled.
Bert Massie Esq. OBE
    Assistant Director, Disablement Services
    Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation.
William Buchanan Esq.
    Special Adviser on Disability
    British Railways Board.
Mrs. Jill Allen-King MBE
    Vice-Chairman, Joint Committee on Mobility of Blind and Partially Sighted People.
Clive Davis Esq.
    Head of Social Service Department
    Royal National Institute for the Deaf.
John Hannam Esq. MP
    Secretary, All Party Disablement Group.
Allan Beard Esq. CB
    Treasurer of Motability and Chairman of Access to the Skies Committee.
Cliff Twort Esq.
    National Secretary, Transport and General Workers Union.
Lady Greengross
    Director, Age Concern.
Robert Taylor Esq.
    Director, Birmingham Airport.
John Dobinson Esq.
    Director, Access Committee for England.
Mrs. Claudia Flanders OBE
    Transport and Disability Consultant.
Joe Hennessy Esq. OBE
    A Vice President, Disabled Drivers Association.
Trevor Meadows Esq.
    Director, National Advisory Unit for Community Transport.
Keith Brown Esq.
    Board Member, London Regional Transport.
Dr. Adrian Stokes OBE
    A Vice-President, Disabled Drivers Motor Club.
James Elder-Woodward Esq.
    Social Work Department, Strathclyde Regional Council.
Bob Ley Esq.
    South Wales-Transport (retired).
Leslie Stephenson Esq.
    Thoresen Car Ferries Ltd.
James Ross Esq.
    Director, Welfare, Legal and Consultative Services, MENCAP.

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library copies of the minutes of meetings of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Reports from the committee will be made available in the Library. The minutes of its regular meetings are working documents internal to the committee.

The committee may from time to time hold public sessions and the minutes of any such sessions would be made widely available. In addition I believe that the committee hopes shortly to present to the Secretary of State and to publish its first annual report.

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what are the procedures for ensuring that disabled persons' organisations can be kept informed of the deliberations of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Many of the committee's members are themselves representatives of disabled persons' organisations. It is also open to any organisation to suggest matters for the committee's consideration at any time.

Community Buses

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list those bus services operated by community buses registered with the Traffic Commissioners by region; and how many of those buses serve rural areas;

(2) if he will list the bus services that have been issued with community bus permits in the United Kingdom for 1985, 1986 and 1987;

(3) if he will list how many community bus services have been registered each year from 1979 to 1986.

Mr. David Mitchell: The following community bus committees, listed by traffic area, have registered local, mostly rural, bus services. A detailed list of routes is not readily available. No information is readily available for previous years.

North Eastern
Gypsy Rider (Burton Fleming area).
Wolds.

North Western
Barnoldswick and Earby.
Clwyd.
Langwathby and District.

West Midlands
Shipston on Stour.

Eastern
Aldborough Village.
Central Notts.
Coggeshall.
Denton and Alburgh.
Docking.
Gayton and Tiffield.
Grendon.
High Suffolk.
Lilbourne.
Rushton.
Sharrington Village.
Soar Valley.
Upper Waveney.
Wells and District.

South Wales
Nil.

Western
Brannel.
Exe Valley.
Exmoor Rotary Club (Dulverton area).
Gweek Area.
Harbourne.
Isle of Wedmore.
Lanreath and Pelynt.
Lanteglos.
Lerryn Area.
Lizard.
Minety.
North Cotswold.
St. Kew.
St. Breward Area.
Tavistock.
Thamesdown.
Urchfont.
Villager (Stow on the Wold, Chipping Norton, Morton in the Marsh area).
West Penwith.

South Eastern
Bexhill.
Broughton and Mottisford.
Cuckmere.
Downland.
Hailsham Town.
Harting.
Meon Valley.
Meopham.
Stanford in the Vale.
Sutton Bignor and Barlavington.

Metropolitan
Nil.

Scottish
Broch.
Colvend.
Deeside.
Ettrick and Yarrow.
Fyvie.
Hatton.
Insch.
Ordinquhill.
Pitmedden.
Southdean and Hobkirk.
Strathdon.

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many community bus services registered with the Traffic Commissioners claimed the transitional rural bus grant in 1986-87.

Mr. David Mitchell: Transitional rural bus grant was claimed on 61 community bus services in 1986-87.

Mr. Matthew Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the total fuel duty rebate paid in 1986-87 to community bus services broken down by county.

Mr. Mitchell: The total fuel duty rebate paid to community bus services in 1986-87 by county is as follows:

	£
Borders	250·00
Cornwall	187·21
Devon	2,194·90
Dumfries and Galloway	2,207·87
Essex	935·31
Gloucestershire	847·66
Hampshire	1,157·44
Hereford and Worcester	173·61
Humberside	380·53
Kent	141·12
Lancashire	261·76
Norfolk	678·28
Northamptonshire	2,008·75
Nottinghamshire	1,198·02
Oxfordshire	930·52
Somerset	340·48
Suffolk	482·21
Wiltshire	842·83

M25 (Signal Gantries)

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state what practical steps are being taken to reduce the time taken to replace signal gantries on the M25 motorway; why contracts for this work are not let on a lane rental basis; and what is the longest traffic jam recorded on the M25 in the current year as a result of these works.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The installation of the new gantries could be completed more quickly only if more onerous traffic restrictions were to be employed.

Lane rental which is appropriate for major maintenance contracts would not have provided the answer here.

We have no record of the longest traffic jam. Significant delays have occurred particularly for westbound traffic in the morning peak hours.

Mr. Winston Wright (Letter)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Secretary of State for Transport why the Treasury Solicitor, acting on his instructions, has failed to reply to the letter dated 4 September 1986 from Messrs Dunn and Baker, solicitors, acting on behalf of Mr. Winston George Wright of Westcott Farm, Cullompton; and whether he will instruct the Treasury Solicitor to settle this matter forthwith, and to make an interim payment on account.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Treasury Solicitor replied to the letter on 4 September 1986 and has written twice subsequently to Mr. Wright's solicitors. The Department will seek an early meeting with Messrs Dunn and Baker. It is hoped that this will settle the outstanding matters, including the question of an interim payment.

Transport and the Environment

Dr. Owen asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much it cost to produce the booklet "Transport and the Environment"; how many copies have been printed; and at what cost.

Mr. Moore: The Department of Transport's contribution to the European Year of the Environment, the booklet "Transport and the Environment", cost £13,125 to design and produce, and £25,100 to print 20,000 copies.

DEFENCE

RAF Binbrook

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the number of men stationed at, the number of civilians employed at, and the annual total cost of RAF Binbrook for each of the last eight years.

Mr. Freeman: The present cost accounting system for RAF stations has been in operation for only the last five years. During this period the annual direct operating costs at RAF Binbrook have been as follows:

	£ million
1982-83	27·1
1983-84	31·6
1984-85	39·3
1985-86	37·8
[1]1986-87	40·0

[1] Estimate.

Over the same period the number of civilian staff, including part-time employees, as at 1 April each year, has been as follows:

	Number
1983	134
1984	111
1985	111
1986	113
1987	111

It is not our practice, for security reasons, to publish the number of senior personnel at individual stations or establishments.

DROPS

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will identify those parts of the DROPS requirement which emerged in 1979-80 which were not envisaged prior to this date during the period when the concept was still known, inter alia, as the Ampliroll system; when such aspects of the present DROPS concept became part of the user's DROPS requirement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement will write to my right hon. Friend.

Atomic Tests (Christmas Island)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether accurate records are available listing every service man who was at Christmas Island during the atomic tests; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is not normal for a list to be compiled showing the names of all those present at a particular time and place, but the extensive searches undertaken in support of the health study have identified a high proportion of those whose participation meets the definitions set by NRPB for inclusion.

Ulster Defence Regiment

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the average time served by officers and other ranks of the Ulster Defence Regiment separately for full-time and part-time officers as at 31 December 1986.

Mr. Freeman: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Royal Naval College, Greenwich

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list those Government Departments which have, in the last five years, made use of the JASON nuclear reactor facility at the Royal Naval college, Greenwich; and if he will identify the purpose and date of each such occasion;

(2) if he will list those commercial companies which have in the last five years made use of the JASON nuclear reactor facility at the Royal Naval college, Greenwich; and if he will identify the purpose and the date of each such occasion;

(3) if he will list those university and polytechnic departments which have, in the last five years, made use of the JASON nuclear reactor facility at the Royal Naval college, Greenwich; and if he will identify the purpose and date of each such occasion.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The only Government Department to have used the JASON nuclear reactor facility at the Royal Naval college, Greenwich, during the last five years is the Ministry of Defence. It has been used on a frequent basis as part of the training provided at the college in support of the Royal Navy nuclear propulsion programme. The output on average from the facility is just about sufficient to power a 60-watt light bulb.

Infantry Sales Team

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state *(a)* the reasons for, and the date of the formation of, the infantry sales team, *(b)* its cost to public funds, *(c)* its relationship to the Defence Export Services Organisation and *(d)* the countries visited since its inception.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A small infantry sales team was established in 1986. In addition to its normal duties it holds itself ready, under the direction of the Defence Export Services Organisation, to assist United Kingdom manufacturers in the sale and promotion of British infantry equipment overseas. Apart from the pay and allowances of the team members, all other costs are borne by the commercial companies involved. Since 1986 the team has visited the following countries:

Indonesia
Luxemburg
USA
France
Canada
Saudi Arabia
Turkey
Jordan
Malaysia

Defence Contractors

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many inquiries have been carried out by the Ministry of Defence police into allegations of crime in defence contractors in each of the past five years; whether the results in each case were reported to Ministers; and what action was taken in each case where the inquiry showed that crime had been committed.

Mr. Archie Hamilton [*pursuant to his reply,* 13 March 1987, c. *322*]: Over the five years October 1981 to October 1986, Ministry of Defence police inquired into 35 allegations of serious crime. Of these, nine were classified as "no crime"; nine were resolved by administrative action; eight by way of prosecution; the remaining nine are still under investigation.

Liquid Fuels

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence on what assumption for *(a)* the world oil price in dollars and *(b)* the exchange rate between the pound sterling and the dollar, his Department has estimated spending on liquid fuels for the financial year 1987-88.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply,* 29 April 1987, c.*179*]: In accordance with the usual conventions, spending on liquid fuels for the financial year 1987-88, as with other commodities, was estimated on the basis of forecast 1986-87 prices, and on the exchange rates prevailing at the end of June 1986 (the dollar rate then being £1 = $1·50). These estimates varied according to fuel types and the purchasing arrangements concerned and were not based directly on the world oil price in dollars.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the level of consumption of liquid fuel in petajoules, by his Department in *(a)* 1984-85, *(b)* 1985-86, *(c)* 1 April to 31 December 1985 and *(d)* 1 April to 31 December 1986.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply,* 29 April 1987, c. *179*]: The information is as follows:

	Petajoules
(a) 1984-85	117·42
(b) 1985-86	109·52
(c) 1 April to 31 December 1985	77·76
(d) 1 April to 31 December 1986	84·58

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated level of consumption of liquid fuels in petajoules by his Department in *(a)* 1986-87, *(b)* 1987-88.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply,* 29 April 1987, c. *179*]: The estimated level of liquid fuel consumption expressed in petajoules for 1986-87 was 115. It is too early to give an equivalent figure for 1987-88, but the amount of fuel available will enable activity levels to be broadly comparable with those of recent normal years.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence what savings in the annual consumption of liquid fuels in petajoules his Department has achieved as a result of the opening of the Mount Pleasant airport and other investments in the Falklands.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply,* 29 April 1987, c. *179*]: The annual consumption of liquid fuels in the Falklands in 1986-87 was reduced by approximately 0·5 petajoules primarily due to the opening of the Mount Pleasant airport complex.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimate of outturn expenditure on liquid fuels, net of appropriation in aid, for the financial year 1986-87.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply,* 29 April 1987, c. *179*]: The latest forecast of outturn for 1986-87 on liquid fuels net of appropriations in aid is £351 million.

United Kingdom-United States of America (Treaties)

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all treaties, agreements, memoranda of understanding and other formal arrangements currently in force between the United States of America and the United Kingdom, covering the collaborative research, development and production of defence equipment and British participation in United States defence programmes.

Mr. Archie Hamilton [*pursuant to his reply,* 1 May 1987, c. *300*]: The major arrangements currently in effect between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States covering collaborative research development and production of defence equipment are as follows. We have tried to make these lists as comprehensive as possible. However, there are numerous relatively minor arrangements, particularly in research and information exchange, of which it would be disproportionately costly to attempt to compile a comprehensive schedule. The lists

do not include arrangements of a classified nature; nor do they cover supplies of British defence equipment to the United States under purely commercial arrangements.

General

Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, signed 27 January 1950 (Cmnd. 7894).

Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of America to Facilitate the Exchange of Patents and Technical Information for Defense Purposes, dated 19 January 1953. (Cmnd. 8757).

Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, signed 19 January 1953.

United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland General Security Agreement, signed 14 April 1961.

Agreement Relating to Defense: Weapons Production Program between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, dated 29 June 1962. (Cmnd. 1863).

United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Memorandum of Understanding Arrangements for Joint Military Development, May 1963.

The Basic Standardization Agreement Among the Armies of the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, and Australia: 1 October 1964.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland relating to the Principles Governing Cooperation in Research and Development, Production, Procurement and Logistic Support of Defence Equipment dated December 1985.

	Date of Original Arrangement
Sea systems	
Sea Gnat Decoy System (includes Denmark)	January 1977
Sub Harpoon (bilateral)	August 1981
NATO Frigate Replacement for the 1990s (includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Spain)	May 1984
Advanced Sea Mine (bilateral)	September 1986
Ship launched Harpoon (bilateral)	October 1986
Land systems	
Standardization of 155mm howitzers and ammunition (includes Germany)	February 1969
Standardization of Main Battle Tank Armament (includes Germany)	April 1974
Remotely Piloted Vehicles (bilateral)	October 1978
Tow Anti Tank Guided Weapon (bilateral)	October 1978
Multiple Launch Rocket System Phase I (includes France, Germany and Italy)	June 1979
Acquisition of Non Tactical Vehicles and Spares for US Forces in UK (bilateral)	July 1979
Special Armours Information Exchange (bilateral)	September 1979
Rapier for USAF Bases in UK and Turkey (bilateral)	February 1981
Second Generation Anti Tank Guided Weapons (includes France and Germany)	April 1981
Multiple Launch Rocket System Phase III (includes France and Germany)	September 1981
155mm Autonomous Precision Guided Munitions (includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and Turkey)	June 1986
Tactical Communications for post 2000 (bilateral)	April 1987
Air systems	
Phantom/Hercules Procurement (bilateral)	February 1965
Research and Development Cooperation on Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (bilateral)	April 1972
JP 233 Air-to-Ground Weapon (bilateral)	August 1976
Sky Flash Joint Trials Programme (bilateral)	March 1977
NATO AEW & C (includes Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Turkey)	December 1978
Sidewinder AIM 9b European Production (includes Germany, Italy and Norway)	January 1979
Harrier GR5/AV8-B (bilateral)	April 1979
AMRAAM/ASRAAM Family of Weapons (including France and Germany)	August 1980
Long Range Stand Off Missile (includes Germany)	July 1984
Short Range Anti-Radiation Missile (includes Belgium, Canada, Germany, Italy and Netherlands)	October 1984
Purchase of AWACS (bilateral)	February 1987
Cooperative Logistics Arrangement (bilateral)	May 1966
Cooperation on Fuel Cell Research (bilateral)	November 1968
Cooperative Research and Development on Diving (bilateral)	October 1970
Development of Personal Radiation Dosimeter (bilateral)	May 1973
Mutual Acceptance of Quality Assurance Procedures (bilateral)	April 1974
Navstar Satellite Navigation System (includes Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Netherlands)	May 1978
Anti Misting Kerosene Studies (bilateral)	June 1978
Joint Tactical Information Distribution System (bilateral)	January 1979
Multifunctional Information Distribution System (includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Norway and Spain)	January 1980
Interest Bearing Account with the Federal Reserve Bank for United Kingdom Foreign Military Sales Procurement (bilateral)	March 1980
NATO Identification System (includes Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Turkey)	May 1980
Mutual Acceptance of Ordnance Test Procedures (bilateral)	July 1980
Mutual Acceptance of Test and Evaluation Procedures for Reciprocal Procurement of Defence Equipment (includes France and Germany)	December 1983
Millimetre Wave Seekers Programme (bilateral)	June 1984
Cooperative Research for the US Strategic Defense Initiative (bilateral)	December 1985
Advanced Short Take Off/Vertical Landing Technology Programme (bilateral)	January 1986
Airborne Radar Demonstrator Programme (includes France)	October 1986
ADA Computer Language, Project Support Environment (includes Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway and Spain)	December 1986
Universal Modem (bilateral)	January 1987

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all treaties, agreements, memoranda of understanding and other formal arrangements currently in force between the United States of America and the United Kingdom covering the exchange of information, materials and designs concerning the research development and production of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Archie Hamilton [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 May 1987, c. *300*]: The list is as follows:

(i) The agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of America for "Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes" (Cmnd. 537 July 1958) (as amended by Cmnd. 859 November 1959 and Cmnd. 3842 December 1968).

(ii) The "Polaris Sales Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland the the Government of the United States of America" (Cmnd. 1995 April 1963), as extended to cover the procurement of the Trident missile system.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Questions (Cost)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Lord Privy Seal how many oral questions and written questions were asked during the current Parliament; and at what cost.

Mr. Biffen: Up to and including 13 May 1987, 58,770 oral and 124,284 written questions had appeared on the Notice Paper. An estimate of the total cost of answering these questions is not readily available and I refer my hon. Friend to the current average cost figures given in my answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) on 27 April, *Official Report*, column 56.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Diabetics

Mr. Gerald Howarth asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to complete arrangements enabling disposable syringes and needles to be made available for diabetics on prescription free of charge.

Mr. Newton: I am glad to be able to announce that, following discussions with manufacturers, we expect to be able by September both to secure sufficient supplies of disposable equipment and to make appropriate arrangements for the safe disposal of the needles, in a quantity which may be of the order of 100 million a year.

Accordingly, disposable single-use syringes and needles will be available for diabetics on general practitioner prescription from 1 September, throughout the United Kingdom. Since diabetics are exempt from prescription charges, they will be free for adults as well as for children.

We have been particularly concerned to ensure effective arrangements for safe disposal of the equipment after use. In this respect a number of details remain to be resolved; but we have established that sufficient supplies of a needle-clipping device can be made available from mid August. At the same time as disposable syringes and needles become available on prescription, therefore, such a device will also be made available on prescription.

The new arrangements will be a significant improvement in service for up to 200,000 diabetics who require regular injections of insulin to maintain the stability of their condition. The greater comfort and convenience of disposables will be particularly helpful for the many children concerned. The estimated cost may well approach £10 million in a full year.

Community Dietitians

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the district health authorities which have community dietitians in post; and which authorities have currently advertised vacancies for community dietitians.

Mr. Newton: From the British Dietetic Association vacant appointments list during the last six months the following district health authorities in England have advertised for community dietitians.

Some of these will be replacements and to cover maternity leave.

South Birmingham
South Tees
Basildon & Thurrock
Southend
Kettering
Haringey
West Berkshire
North West Hertfordshire
East Yorkshire
Walsall
Bradford
Southern Derbyshire
Richmond, Twickenham & Roehampton
Nottingham
Mid Essex
Waltham Forrest
North Tees
West Birmingham
Wandsworth
Central Nottinghamshire

The following list shows the health authorities in England where Community dietitians are employed. The total number employed in England is currently 103.

AUTHORITIES EMPLOYING COMMUNITY DIETITIAN IN ENGLAND

Northern Regional Health Authority
  Darlington Health Authority

Yorkshire Regional Health Authority
  Pontefract Health Authority
  Harrogate Health Authority
  Leeds Western Health Authority
  Bradford Health Authority
  Calderdale Health Authority

Trent Regional Health Authority
  Leicestershire Health Authority
  Central Nottinghamshire Health Authority
  Southern Derbyshire Health Authority
  Nottingham Health Authority
  Doncaster Health Authority

East Anglian Regional Health Authority
  Huntingdon Health Authority
  Peterborough Health Authority
  Norwich Health Authority
  Cambridge Health Authority

North West Thames Regional Health Authority
  Barnet Health Authority
  Paddington and North Kensington Health Authority
  South Bedfordshire Health Authority
  North West Hertfordshire Health Authority
  Brent Health Authority
  Riverside Health Authority
  Wandsworth Health Authority
  Ealing Health Authority

North East Thames Regional Health Authority
  Basildon and Thurrock Health Authority
  Mid Essex Health Authority
  Redbridge Health Authority
  City and Hackney Health Authority
  Bloomsbury Health Authority
  Tower Hamlets Health Authority
  Waltham Forest Health Authority
  Newham Health Authority
  Hampstead Health Authority

South West Thames Regional Health Authority
North West Surrey Health Authority
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton Health Authority
Croydon Health Authority

South East Thames Regional Health Authority
West Lambeth Health Authority
Hastings Health Authority
Lewisham and North Southwark Health Authority
Eastbourne Health Authority
Brighton Health Authority

Wessex Regional Health Authority
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Health Authority
Basingstoke and North Hampshire Health Authority
Swindon Health Authority
Bath Health Authority
Southampton Health Authority

Oxford Regional Health Authority
Northampton Health Authority
East Berkshire Health Authority
West Berkshire Health Authority
Milton Keynes Health Authority
Oxfordshire Health Authority

South Western Regional Health Authority
Exeter Health Authority
Southmead Health Authority

West Midlands Regional Health Authority
Wolverhampton Health Authority
South Birmingham Health Authority
South Warwickshire Health Authority
West Birmingham Health Authority
Birmingham Central Health Authority
North Warwickshire Health Authority
Sandwell Health Authority

Mersey Regional Health Authority
South Sefton Health Authority

North Western Regional Health Authority
Lancaster Health Authority
Rochdale Health Authority
Salford Health Authority
Oldham Health Authority
Bolton Health Authority
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Health Authority
North Manchester Health Authority
Central Manchester Health Authority
Trafford Health Authority
Preston Health Authority
Bury Health Authority
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Health Authority

Child's Special Allowance

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many widows claimed the child's special allowance for the last three years for which this information is available; and if he will give the estimated take-up rate of this benefit.

Mr. Major: Child's special allowance is payable to divorced women in respect of children towards whose support the ex-husband was contributing or was liable to contribute at the time of his death. In the three years immediately preceding 6 April 1987 when the allowance was abolished, except for existing beneficiaries, the number of claims received was:

	Number
1984-85	135
1985-86	152
1986-87	146

Given the conditions for entitlement to the allowance it has not been possible to estimate a take-up rate.

Young Single Parents

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether 16 and 17 year-old single parents will be eligible for the family and lone parent premiums when the new income support scheme is introduced; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: Yes.

Infectious Diseases

Dr. Blackburn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to which infectious diseases can be contracted by the use of a communal cup such as a chalice; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: There is no evidence that infectious disease can be contracted in this way.

Benefits

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will set out in tabular form the amount of rent rebates and allowances, rate rebates and subsequently housing benefit received per week by households on incomes *(a)* at supplementary benefit levels, *(b)* 10 per cent. above supplementary benefit level, *(c)* 20 per cent. above supplementary benefit level, *(d)* 30 per cent. above supplementary benefit level and *(e)* 40 per cent. above supplementary benefit level for each financial year from 1979-80 to 1986-87.

Mr. Lyell: The information is not available in the form requested except at disproportionate cost. However some relevant information is contained in the department's tax/benefit model tables, a copy of which is in the Library.

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the latest estimate of his Department's expenditure on promoting the take-up of social security benefits on an annual basis.

Mr. Lyell: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on 26 March at column *257*.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take action to ensure that child benefit is reinstated under the Child Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1987 S.I.357/1987 in those cases where the young person concerned is taking examinations during this summer term and therefore not entitled to supplementary benefit in his or her own right.

Mr. Major: Child benefit is reinstated immediately upon application in these circumstances.

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the latest estimate of the take-up of housing benefit and family income supplement broken down into *(a)* the numbers entitled to benefit, *(b)* the proportion receiving benefit, *(c)* the numbers eligible but not receiving benefit, *(d)* the amount unclaimed and *(e)* the average weekly amount unclaimed.

Mr. Lyell: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) on 12 May at column *126*.

Pensions

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate he has of the additional annual costs of paying the level of retirement pension payable to (i) all British retirement and widowed pensioners aged 75 years and over, (ii) all male British retirement and widowed pensioners aged 65 years and over and (iii) all female British retirement and widowed pensioners aged 60 years and over living in all those territories not covered by a reciprocal agreement with the United Kingdom.

Mr. Major: The figures requested for paying United Kingdom rates of benefit at November 1985 levels, the latest date for which calculations can readily be made, are estimated to be approximately

i. £46·4 million
ii. £63·0 million
iii. £103·0 million

For countries with which the United Kingdom does not have a reciprocal agreement providing for pension increases.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will list each country or dependency outside the United Kingdom where United Kingdom retirement pensioners are known to live and draw their pension, showing for each country how many pensioners there are, whether they get pension increases and, for those countries where they do not, what was the average pension paid at 31 December 1986.

Mr. Major: The table shows the countries where United Kingdom pensioners are known to live, the number of pensioners living there, whether annual increases are paid and an estimate of the average pension paid at 31 December 1986.

Pensioners living in the Channel Islands are not included as there is no ready way of identifying payment to them separately from payment to pensioners in the United Kingdom.

Number of pensioners in overseas countries at 31 December 1986

Country	*Number of pensioners*	*(Includes number of widow pensioners)*	*Average pension at 31 December 1986 £*
Albania	6		14·52
Algeria	2		16·46
American Samoa	1		7·01
Andorra	106	(2)	7·90
Angola	1		23·98
Anguilla	63		14·44
Antigua	149	(7)	17·06
Argentina	140	(7)	3·88
Ascension Island	3		1·82
Australia	106,531	(2,735)	12·94
Austria[1]	2,191	(105)	13·80
Bahamas	114	(4)	9·48
Bahrain	18	(3)	5·94
Bangladesh	4,161	(799)	6·59
Barbados	878	(26)	17·69
Belgium[1]	3,011	(146)	14·25
Belize	8		19·53
Benin	1		23·04
Bermuda[1]	258	(13)	20·22
Bolivia	3		0·48
Botswana	48	(7)	7·31
Brazil	162	(19)	4·67
Brunei	8	(1)	13·57
Bulgaria	9		5·68
Burma	5		9·27
Canada	66,649	(1,925)	13·26
Cayman Islands	29	(3)	15·83
Central African Republic	2	(1)	16·50
Chile	45	(5)	4·00
China	11	(1)	1·86
Colombia	20	—	14·25
Cook Islands	4	—	10·74
Costa Rica	7	—	15·91
Cyprus[1]	2,586	(123)	20·55
Czechoslovakia	28	—	12·33
Denmark[1]	293	(33)	23·77
Djibouti	5	—	36·47
Dominica, Commonwealth of	287	(10)	14·17
Dominican Republic	147	(6)	18·84
East Germany	18	(2)	11·62
Ecuador	7	—	5·56
Egypt	46	(3)	5·40
Falkland Islands and Dependencies	8	(1)	5·12
Faroe Islands	2	(1)	24·11
Fiji	26	—	8·74
Finland[1]	54	(14)	25·06
France[1]	5,262	(196)	14·53
Gambia	7	—	31·49
Ghana	45	(1)	8·42
Gibraltar[1]	329	(24)	27·21
Greece[1]	832	(67)	16·06
Grenada	363	(17)	18·07
Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique and Reunion Island[1]	5	—	17·56
Guyana	137	(3)	10·90
Haiti	1	—	28·68
Honduras	3	—	20·42
Hong Kong	383	(21)	11·48
Hungary	158	(5)	14·12
Iceland[1]	20	(4)	16·04
India	5,914	(353)	6·00
Indonesia	21	(1)	1·48
Iraq	4	—	1·39
Irish Republic[1]	45,275	(3,663)	24·05
Israel[1]	2,134	(67)	20·76
Italy[1]	9,007	(881)	20·83
Jamaica[1]	10,951	(360)	24·22
Japan	55	(11)	6·36
Jordan	7	—	5·24
Kenya	395	(10)	4·55
Kiribati (Gilbert Islands)	3	—	6·04
Kuwait	4		12·40
Lebanon	26	(3)	5·41
Lesotho	6		17·97
Liberia	5		16·40
Luxembourg[1]	56	(7)	13·77
Madgascar	2		50·95
Malawi	58	(5)	2·82
Malaya	59	(7)	13·69
Malta[1]	1,628	(72)	17·64
Mauritius[1]	104	(6)	15·74
Mexico	70	(5)	5·01
Monaco	186	(6)	11·51

Country	*Number of pensioners*	*(Includes number of widow pensioners)*	*Average pension at 31 December 1986 £*
Montserrat	189	(1)	15·33
Morocco	35	(1)	2·13
Naura, Republic of	2		20·54
Nepal	20	(2)	4·15
Netherlands[1]	2,128	(182)	15·48
Netherlands Antilles	9	(1)	4·83
New Zealand	26,092	(467)	13·17
Nigeria	105	(31)	4·46
Norfolk Island	14		2·75
Norway	164	(14)	15·00
Pakistan	9,521	(1,159)	5·99
Panama	6	(1)	17·62
Papua New Guinea	17	(1)	4·96
Peru	35	(1)	1·99
Philippines	49	(4)	13·30
Poland	2,764	(41)	3·62
Portugal (including Madeira)[1]	1,166	(24)	13·95
Puerto Rico	5	(1)	13·51
Qatar	9	(1)	3·95
Rumania	20	(2)	9·35
St. Helena and Dependencies	28		16·79
St. Kitts-Nevis	303	(9)	17·08
St. Lucia	443	(8)	18·34
St. Vincent	286	(10)	16·92
San Marino	2		10·90
Sarawak	3		8·33
Saudi Arabia	34	(9)	4·17
Senegal	7		12·52
Seychelles	28	(2)	10·20
Shar jah	2	(1)	5·68
Sierra Leone	41	(3)	6·90
Singapore	78	(9)	7·62
Solomon Islands	3		15·70
Somalia	164	(21)	14·30
South Africa	22,781	(834)	12·89
South Korea	1		19·66
South West Africa or Namibia	13	(2)	18·43
Spain (including Balearic & Canary Islands)[1]	15,395	(586)	16·58
Sri Lanka	111	(11)	5·60
Sudan	11	(2)	11·62
Swaziland	58	(2)	10·07
Sweden	74	(5)	11·45
Switzerland[1]	1,724	(69)	19·71
Syria	2		19·09
Taiwan	5	(1)	16·64
Tanzania	36	(1)	2·94
Thailand	52	(5)	9·13
Tonga	3		9·37
Trinidad and Tobago	296	(14)	15·38
Tunisia	5	(1)	5·13
Turkey[1]	225	(20)	11·25
Turks & Caicos Islands	4		25·33
Uganda	16	(1)	0·91
United Arab Emirates	22	(6)	7·70
USA[1]	37,697	(1,132)	19·98
USSR	769	(7)	11·31
Uruguay	17	(1)	3·70
Vanuata (New Hebrides)	2		3·25
Venezuela	27		2·65
Virgin Islands	37	(7)	9·47
Western Samoa	8	(3)	23·82
West Germany[1]	10,123	(1,009)	15·60
Yemen Arab Republic (North)	902	(63)	14·15
Yemen People's Democratic Republic of (South)	121	(10)	15.07
Yugoslavia[1]	989	(30)	32·75
Zaire	5		0·25
Zambia	117	(12)	3·40
Zimbabwe	4,122	(162)	5·12

[1] Indicates pension increases paid.

Note. — The above figures do not include 5,453 retirement pensioners and 241 widow beneficiaries residing abroad (other than in the Irish Republic) to whom the Department is making payment on behalf of the Northern Ireland authorities.

AIDS

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will initiate, in parallel with the creation of the new national charity for AIDS, the provision of hospice-resource centres in all major population centres in the country; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We wish to see the development of a range of community care services for people with AIDS and we expect health authorities to consider local needs for hospice provision with appropriate voluntary organisations when deciding what facilities are required.

Research Projects

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report*, in tabular form, details of all research projects in the field of diet and health currently being sponsored by his Department, giving details of the amount of time being spent on each project, the location at which the work is being undertaken and the names of the principal researchers concerned.

Mrs. Currie: The Department's directly funded research programme currently includes the following projects in the field of diet and health.

Title	*Location*	*Principal Researchers*	*Expected duration*	*Comments*
Nutritional Survey into fat soluble vitamins	Wolfson Research Laboratories, Department of Clinical Chemistry, Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre, Birmingham	Dr. D. I. Thurnham	January 1984 to March 1988	

Title	*Location*	*Principal Researchers*	*Expected duration*	*Comments*
The National Study of Health and Growth (Nutrition project)	The Social Medicine and Health Services Research Unit, St. Thomas's Hospital Medical School, London	Professor W. Holland and Dr. R. Rona	Commenced in 1972 and continuing	Diet is one aspect of this study of the health and growth of schoolchildren
Survey into schoolchildren's nutrition	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys	—	Commenced 1983	Undertaken on behalf of DHSS
Survey into Infant Feeding	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys	—	Commenced 1985	Undertaken on behalf of DHSS
Adult Nutritional Survey	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys	—	Commenced September 1986	Undertaken on behalf of DHSS and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Hospital Beds

Mr. Waller asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those National Health Service hospitals which have beds available specifically for convalescent patients, stating the number of beds for each hospital, at the latest available date.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is in the table.

National Health Service hospitals having beds available in the convalescent specialty, England 1985

District Health Authority and Hospital	*Average daily available beds*
North Tyneside	
North Tyneside General Hospital	18·0
Leeds Western	
Ilkley Convalescent Home	58·0
South Lincolnshire	
Carey House Convalescent Home	17·9
Central Nottinghamshire	
Langwith Lodge	28·9
East Suffolk	
Chantry Park Convalescent Home	37·7
East Suffolk	
Phyllis Memorial Home	0·5
Paddington	
Hereford Lodge	9·1
Hastings	
Bexhill Hospital	10·0
SW Hants & Southampton	
Netley Castle Convalescent Home	11·9
Oxford	
Chipping Norton War Memorial Hospital	5·2
Bristol & Weston	
Keynsham Hospital	7·3
North Birmingham	
St. Editha's Hospital	1·0

Disabled People

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action is being taken by his Department's social services inspectorate to inform and train employees of social services departments in regard to their duties under the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: It is for local authority social services departments to provide information and training to their staff about the duties that arise under the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986. However, the Department's social services inspectorate has held discussions about the implications of the Act for local authorities at its regular regional meetings with directors of social services, and has responded to requests from staff in individual local authorities for advice on the Act. It also organised a workshop on the Act at the recent annual conference of the British Association of Social Workers. Possible further work by the inspectorate in this field is being considered.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he has taken to speed up the procedures under section 36 of the National Assistance Act 1948 for investigating complaints that local authorities have failed to fulfil their duties under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: I am conscious that in some cases it can take a long time to deal with these complaints. The procedures for handling them within the Department are kept under review, but the main problem is that the more complicated cases necessarily involve a considerable amount of detailed work by officials as well as correspondence, which can be protracted, with the other parties concerned.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in light of the ruling in the case of R v The Department of Health and Social Security, and others ex parte Bruce, he will state the circumstances in which he considers it appropriate to use his default powers under section 36 of the National Assistance Act 1948 in relation to allegations of failure by local authorities to fulfil their duties under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: Section 36(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 provides that the Secretary of State, where he is of the opinion that a local authority has failed to discharge any of its functions under Part III of that Act, or to comply with any related regulations, may, after such an inquiry as he may think fit, make an order declaring the authority to be in default. In the case of the application ex parte Bruce on 5 February 1987, Mr. Justice Simon Brown said, in relation to the default power in section 36(1) of the 1948 Act:

> "So far as that Ministerial power is concerned it is, in my judgement, perfectly clear that the Minister could not properly intervene so as to declare the authority to be in default unless the authority had manifestly failed in the discharge of any of their functions in such way that no reasonable Minister could take a different view: putting it a

different way, had conducted themselves in a way which could only be regarded as a failure on the part of the authority to perform the duty".

We accept this interpretation.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether disabled people in receipt of invalidity benefit or attendance allowance or both who undertake a Manpower Services Commission training course remain eligible for these benefits while on the course;

(2) whether disabled people in receipt of invalidity benefit or attendance allowance or both who undertake a Manpower Services Commission training course requalify immediately for these benefits if they leave the course after eight weeks or more.

Mr. Major: People in receipt of invalidity benefit who undertake a training course for which MSC pays a training allowance are not eligible for invalidity benefit during the course. However when the course ends they requalify for that benefit provided they remain incapable of work. The period of the training course is treated as a part of the same period of interruption of employment so even if the course lasts more than 8 weeks title to invalidity benefit continues.

The position is different for recipients of attendance allowance. If the medical conditions for entitlement continue to be satisfied, attendance allowance is not normally affected by participation in a MSC training course. However, the allowance may not be paid between the fifth week and the end of a course when the cost of any residential accommodation provided for the disabled person as part of the course is, or may be, met from public funds.

Dietary Salt and Hypertension

Mrs. McCurley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received from the Royal Society of Medicine Services on the implications for public health policies of dietary salt and hypertension; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I believe my hon. Friend is referring to the recent report from the Royal Society of Medicine Services "Dietary Salt and Hypertension: Implications for Public Health Services". This report has been received in the Department and is being considered by medical and nutrition advisors.

Green Paper

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to publish his social services Green Paper.

Mr. Newton: As the hon. Member is aware, we have asked Sir Roy Griffiths to review the way in which public funds are used to support community care policy and to advise on options for improving the use of these funds as a contribution to more effective community care. In view of the importance of social services departments' work in this field, we have now decided that it would be appropriate to consider the publication of such a Green Paper in the light of the outcome of his work.

WHO (Health Targets)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action the Government *(a)* have taken and *(b)* propose to take in pursuit of the first of the World Health Organisation's targets for health for all by the year 2,000 which the Government endorsed in 1984.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) on 10 April at columns *506-507*.

Social Security Act 1986

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, what plans he has for monitoring the impact of the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Major: As part of our standard procedures, in planning the implementation of any significant change to the social security system—including those introduced by the Social Security Act 1986—the Department now considers how the impact of the change can best be monitored and makes arrangements for the collection and analysis of the necessary information.

Income Support and Family Credit

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he plans to lay before Parliament the draft regulations for the income support and family credit schemes; and whether before this he plans to make draft regulations available.

Mr. Major: Work on the detailed provisions for the income support and family credit schemes is not yet complete. The formal regulations cannot be laid before Parliament until decisions have been taken on the benefit rates in the autumn since it is only possible to legislate on the basis of figures which will be implemented. Before this, we do however intend to place copies of the regulations in draft in the Library when they are finalised apart from the benefit rates.

Children (Social Workers)

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will take steps to empower social service workers with the statutory right to see and interview children about whose welfare there is concern.

Mr. Newton: Where a magistrate is satisfied that a social worker has reasonable cause to believe that the conditions for a care order are satisfied—these include neglect and ill treatment—he can grant an order authorising removal of the child to a place of safety. If the social worker is unable to gain access to the child the magistrate can issue a warrant to a constable who can enforce access. Some changes to the present law are envisaged in the White Paper "The Law on Child Care and Family Services".

Severe Weather Payments

Dame Judith Hart asked the Secretary of State for Social Services in which weeks of the current year the trigger temperature for cold weather payments was reached in the constituency of Clydesdale.

Mr. Major: From 11 December 1986 to 25 January 1987, the trigger temperature for cold weather payments was minus 1·5 deg C. From 26 January, it was amended to 0 deg C. The constituency of Clydesdale has three weather stations at Dumfries, Glasgow airport and Prestwick. In the week commencing 12 January, Dumfries and Prestwick reached the minus 1·5 deg C. trigger temperature. In the week commencing 26 January Glasgow airport triggered at 0 deg C. Payments were, however, available to people in the qualifying groups throughout the country for the weeks commencing 12 and 19 January.

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list by his Department's offices how many people applied for the extra £5 payment for exceptionally cold weather allowance made available for the weeks beginning 12 and 19 January; how many applications have been processed; and how many payments have been made.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *130*]: The information is not available in the precise form requested. Local offices have been asked to make a return so that the number of payments made and claims refused over the entire winter period can be calculated. Not all of these returns have yet been received. A copy of the returns will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

Up to 10 March, the latest date for which information is available, approximately two million exceptionally cold weather payments of £5 have been made and 377,500 claims refused.

Dr. Kevin Browne

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that no potential for conflicts of interest arises from Dr. Kevin Browne's relationship to both Cape Industries plc and the London Medical Boarding Centre (Respiratory Diseases);

(2) what information was available to him on Dr. Kevin Browne's relationship to Cape Industries plc at the time of his appointment to the London Medical Boarding Centre (Respiratory Diseases).

Mr. Major: Before his appointment as a part-time medical officer to the London Medical Boarding Centre (Respiratory Diseases), Dr. Browne was employed as medical adviser to Cape Industries plc. The Department takes steps to ensure that Dr. Browne does not board claimaints who have been employed at Cape Industries.

Residential Units

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the reply of 23 March, *Official Report*, column *81*, regarding the sale of residential units, if he will now publish the equivalent date for 1986-87.

Mrs. Currie: As yet information for the year ending 31 March 1987 is only available for three regions. It is as follows:

Regional Health Authority	*Units Sold*	*Proceeds £*
Yorkshire	56	1,334,010
Oxford	30	1,306,000
North Western	72	1,619,522

All proceeds are retained by health authorities to improve their remaining residential accommodation and to develop services.

Health Authorities

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report (a)* a list of the constituencies served by each health authority and *(b)* a list of the health authorities serving constituency.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not held centrally in the form requested.

YTS

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many young people have suffered a deduction in supplementary benefit for *(a)* refusing to take up a YTS place and *(b)* leaving a YTS place in (i) Coventry and (ii) nationally, since the provision was first introduced.

Mr. Lyell: The table sets out the information requested for the period from December 1983 to April 1987. The youth training scheme started in April 1983 but statistical records were not kept from the outset.

Numbers whose benefit was reduced	*Coventry*	*National Figures*
(a) For refusal to accept a YTS place	23	2,235
(b) For prematurely leaving a YTS course	167	23,267

NHS (Staff)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many (i) nurses and (ii) ancillary staff have left the employment of the National Health Service for reasons other than retirement for each year from 1979 to 1987.

Mr. Newton: I regret that information about nurses and ancillary staff leaving the National Health Service is not collected centrally.

Hospitals (In-patients)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the average length of in-patient stay in hospital;

(2) how many patient beds were available on an average day in each year in National Health Service hospitals from 1979 until 1986.

Mrs. Currie: For the latest information available I refer the hon. Member to statistical bulletin 2/86 "NHS Hospital Activity Statistics for England 1974-1985", a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Government Achievements (Pensioners)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the Government's achievements in respect of pensioners.

Mr. Major: The Government's main achievement for pensioners has been the creation of a stable and improving economy, with low inflation. This has enabled pensioners at all income levels to improve their living standards, both absolutely and in relation to the population as a whole. Building on a secure foundation of a retirement pension fully protected against price increases, pensioners have, on average, increased their total net incomes in real terms by

18 per cent. over the period 1979-1985 (the latest for which figures are available). This increase is more than twice the increase achieved by the population as a whole. Over 50 per cent. of pensioners now have occupational pensions, compared with 41 per cent. in 1979 and the average value of such pensions has risen by over 50 per cent. Over 70 per cent. have income from savings, compared with 62 per cent. in 1979, and the average value of such income has also risen by over 50 per cent. These improvements have taken place despite an increase of almost a million in the number of pensioners.

In respect of social security benefits, the basic pension has more than kept pace with prices, and now stands at £63·25 for a married couple and £39·50 for a single person. The development of the earnings-related pension scheme means that a man on average earnings retiring after April 1987 may receive additional pension of about £20 week, compared with 95p (in 1979 prices) for a similar man retiring in April 1979. At September 1986 some 1·8 million pensioners (18·5 per cent. of the total) received extra pension under the earnings-related arrangements, either as additional pension from the state or guaranteed minimum pension paid by their employers. The residual effects of the married women's half test have been finally abolished, enabling some 30,000 women to receive a pension for the first time or to increase their existing pension; many more benefited from tax advantages. Entitlement to a non-contributory pension for those over 80 was extended, and made payable at higher rate to some recipients. The number of pensioners receiving supplementary pension has fallen from 1·73 million in February 1979 to 1·68 million in February 1986, despite the increase in the total number of pensioners; only 25 per cent. of pensioners are now in the lowest income quintile of the population, compared with 38 per cent. in 1979. Higher take-up of benefits such as mobility allowance and attendance allowance has extended them to greater numbers of pensioners than in 1979, and total spending on social security benefits for the elderly has increased by some 29 per cent. between 1978-79 and 1986-87.

In respect of health and social services, provision for the increasing number of elderly people has been maintained and improved. The development of health services for elderly people has been one of the Government's highest priorities for the National Health Service. Our main objective has been to provide services which enable elderly people to live at home for as long as possible. To this end, the community health services have been expanded considerably. For example, between 1978 and 1985 the number of elderly people treated by district nurses rose by 28 per cent. and the number of elderly people treated by chiropodists rose by 25 per cent.

The specialty of geriatrician medicine has continued to expand. Between 1978 and 1985, the number of consultant geriatricians increased by 45 per cent. Between 1978 and 1985, the numbers of elderly in-patients treated rose by 60 per cent. and out-patients by 40 per cent. and day hospital attendances by 20 per cent. Elderly people have also benefited from the development of acute hospital services. Between 1978 and 1984 the numbers of cases of elderly people treated for acute conditions increased by 24 per cent., hip replacements increased from 28,000 to 38,000, and cataract operations from 38,000 to 55,000. There have also been significant increases in personal social services. Between 1978 and 1985, the number of day centre places for elderly people rose by 15·5 per cent. and the number of home helps grew by 14 per cent.

Since 1979 age allowances in the tax system have been increased significantly in real terms and this year a new higher age allowance was introduced for people aged 80 and over. About 400,000 elderly single people and married couples will benefit; up to 25,000 will be taken out of tax completely by the new allowance.

Pensioners

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been, for a worker on average earnings retiring in *(a)* 1974, *(b)* 1979, *(c)* 1984, and *(d)* 1987 (i) the level of the retirement pension, (ii) average occupational pension, (iii) the state earnings related pension scheme pension, where applicable, (iv) average investment income for a worker on average earnings.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 April 1987 c. *632*]: The available information is shown in the tables. Table 1 gives the level of the single person's full rate basic pension at uprating dates in each of the years specified, and the level of state earnings related pension awarded to a man on average earnings retiring on 6 April of each of those years. I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 12 January 1987 at columns *123-24* for the assumptions governing these figures. Table 2 shows the average amounts of occupational pension and investment income received weekly by all tax units in the specified age groups in each of the years for which information is available. It is not possible to identify those people retiring in the years specified, nor is information on previous earnings histories available from the family expenditure survey data upon which this table is based.

Table 1

£ per week

	Basic pension[1,2]	*State Earnings Related Pension*
1974	10.00	n/a
1979	19·50	0·95
1984	35·80	10·80
1987	39·50	20·05

Table 2[3]

£ per week

	Occupational pension	*Investment income*
1974	4·00	3·10
1979	10·70	6·30
1984	19·00	9·00
1985[4]	23·40	14·00

[1] Basic pension entitlement does not depend upon an individual's earnings history but upon his national insurance contribution record over his working life.

[2] Graduated pension and increments for deferred retirement are excluded.

[3] The tax units in Table 2 may be single men aged 65-69, single women aged 60-64 or married couples where the husband is 65-69. Due to small sample sizes it is necessary to provide data for 5 year age groups rather than for men or women reaching state pensionable age in the years specified.

[4] Latest date for which information is available.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish figures setting out the components of net weekly spending power in November 1985 and November 1986 for each of a single and a married retirement pensioner, assuming *(a)* £15 a week rent and £7 rates and *(b)* £30 a week rent and £10 a week rates, and with the following amounts of income in addition to the state basic pension: £0, £5, £10, £15, £20, £30, £40, £50 and £100 respectively.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply,* 27 April 1987, c. *31-32*]: The information requested is shown in the tables. The housing benefit components did not change between November 1985 and November 1986 because at the July 1986 uprating, the needs allowances were increased exactly in line with retirement pensions.

Components of net weekly spending power for pensioners receiving housing benefit
Table 1: 1985, Rent £15·00, Rates £7·00
November 1985
Single Pensioner

Income (gross) £	*Tax* £	*Rent* £	*Rent rebate* £	*Rates* £	*Rate rebate* £	*Disposable income* £
38·30	Nil	15·00	14·13	7·00	6·25	36·68
43·30	0·27	15·00	11·63	7·00	5·25	37·91
48·30	1·77	15·00	9·13	7·00	4·25	37·91
53·30	3·27	15·00	7·62	7·00	3·58	39·23
58·30	4·77	15·00	6·17	7·00	2·93	40·63
68·30	7·77	15·00	3·27	7·00	1·63	43·43
78·30	10·77	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	45·53
88·30	13·77	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	52·53
138·30	28·77	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	87·53

Pensioner Couple

Income (gross) £	*Tax* £	*Rent* £	*Rent rebate* £	*Rates* £	*Rate rebate* £	*Disposable income* £
61·30	Nil	15·00	13·88	7·00	6·15	59·33
66·30	Nil	15·00	11·38	7·00	5·15	60·83
71·30	1·46	15·00	8·93	7·00	4·17	60·93
76·30	2·96	15·00	7·48	7·00	3·52	62·34
81·30	4·46	15·00	6·03	7·00	2·87	63·74
91·30	7·46	15·00	3·13	7·00	1·57	66·54
101·30	10·46	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	68·84
111·30	13·46	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	75·84
161·30	28·46	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	110·84

Table 2: 1985, Rent £30·00, Rates £10·00
November 1985
Single Pensioner

Income (gross) £	*Tax* £	*Rent* £	*Rent rebate* £	*Rates* £	*Rate rebate* £	*Disposable income* £
38·30	Nil	30·00	23·13	10·00	8·05	29·48
43·30	0·27	30·00	20·63	10·00	7·05	30·71
48·30	1·77	30·00	18·13	10·00	6·05	30·71
53·30	3·27	30·00	16·62	10·00	5·38	32·03
58·30	4·77	30·00	15·17	10·00	4·73	33·43
68·30	7·77	30·00	12·27	10·00	3·43	36·23
78·30	10·77	30·00	9·37	10·00	2·13	39·03
88·30	13·77	30·00	6·47	10·00	0·83	41·83
138·30	28·77	30·00	Nil	10·00	Nil	69·61

Pensioner Couple

Income (gross) £	*Tax* £	*Rent* £	*Rent rebate* £	*Rates* £	*Rate rebate* £	*Disposable income* £
61·30	Nil	30·00	22·88	10·00	7·95	52·13
66·30	Nil	30·00	20·38	10·00	6·95	53·63
71·30	1·46	30·00	17·93	10·00	5·97	53·74
76·30	2·96	30·00	16·48	10·00	5·32	55·14
81·30	4·46	30·00	15·03	10·00	4·67	56·54
91·30	7·46	30·00	12·13	10·00	3·37	59·34
101·30	10·46	30·00	9·23	10·00	2·07	62·14
111·30	13·46	30·00	6·33	10·00	0·77	64·94
161·30	28·46	30·00	Nil	10·00	Nil	92·84

Table 3: 1986, Rent £15·00, Rates £7·00
November 1986
Single Pensioner

Income (gross) £	*Tax* £	*Rent* £	*Rent rebate* £	*Rates* £	*Rate rebate* £	*Disposable income* £
38·70	Nil	15·00	14·13	7·00	6·25	37·08
43·70	Nil	15·00	11·63	7·00	5·25	38·58
48·70	1·10	15·00	9·13	7·00	4·25	38·98
53·70	2·55	15·00	7·62	7·00	3·58	40·35
58·70	4·00	15·00	6·17	7·00	2·93	41·80
68·70	6·90	15·00	3·27	7·00	1·63	44·70
78·70	9·80	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	46·90
88·70	12·70	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	54·00
138·70	27·20	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	89·50

Pensioner Couple

Income (gross) £	*Tax* £	*Rent* £	*Rent rebate* £	*Rates* £	*Rate rebate* £	*Disposable income* £
61·95	Nil	15·00	13·88	7·00	6·15	59·98
66·95	Nil	15·00	11·38	7·00	5·15	61·48
71·95	0·48	15·00	8·93	7·00	4·17	62·57
76·95	1·93	15·00	7·48	7·00	3·52	64·02
81·95	3·38	15·00	6·03	7·00	2·87	65·47
91·95	6·28	15·00	3·13	7·00	1·57	68·37
101·95	9·18	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	70·77
111·95	12·08	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	77·87
161·95	26·58	15·00	Nil	7·00	Nil	113·37

Table 4: 1986, Rent £30·00, Rates £15·00
November 1986
Single Pensioner

Income (gross) £	*Tax* £	*Rent* £	*Rent rebate* £	*Rates* £	*Rate rebate* £	*Disposable income* £
38·70	Nil	30·00	23·13	10·00	8·05	29·88
43·70	Nil	30·00	20·63	10·00	7·05	31·38
48·70	1·10	30·00	18·13	10·00	6·05	31·78
53·70	2·55	30·00	16·62	10·00	5·38	33·15
58·70	4·00	30·00	15·17	10·00	4·73	34·60
68·70	6·90	30·00	12·27	10·00	3·43	37·70
78·70	9·80	30·00	9·37	10·00	2·13	40·40
88·70	12·70	30·00	6·47	10·00	0·83	43·30
138·70	27·20	30·00	Nil	10·00	Nil	71·50

Pensioner Couple

Income (gross) £	*Tax* £	*Rent* £	*Rent rebate* £	*Rates* £	*Rate rebate* £	*Disposable income* £
61·95	Nil	30·00	22·88	10·00	7·95	52·78
66·95	Nil	30·00	20·38	10·00	6·95	54·28
71·95	0·48	30·00	17·93	10·00	5·97	55·37
76·95	1·93	30·00	16·48	10·00	5·32	56·82
81·95	3·38	30·00	15·03	10·00	4·67	58·27
91·95	6·28	30·00	12·13	10·00	3·37	61·17
101·95	9·18	30·00	9·23	10·00	2·07	64·07
111·95	12·08	30·00	6·33	10·00	0·77	66·97
161·95	26·58	30·00	Nil	10·00	Nil	95·37

Notes:

[1] The November 1985 retirement pensions and housing benefit needs allowances have been used for tables 1 and 2, and the July 1986 levels for tables 3 and 4.

[2] The 1985-86 age allowances and tax rate have been used for tables 1 and 2, and the 1986-87 levels for tables 3 and 4.

[3] Income is assumed to be unearned throughout.

Legionella Infection

Mr. Powley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he proposes to issue further guidance to health authorities on the ways of reducing the risk of outbreaks of legionella infection.

Mr. Newton: We are issuing two health notices to all health authorities in England. The first, which follows from the first report of the committee of inquiry into the outbreak of legionnaires' disease in Stafford in April 1985, asks health authorities to install dry-cooled air conditioning systems in new hospital buildings, and to replace existing wet-spray systems when upgrading is required, unless this is absolutely precluded by space or weight considerations. It also gives advice on the safe operation and maintenance of wet-spray systems while they continue to be used or where it is impracticable to replace them. The second health notice is based on a survey undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory Service at the request of the Department, and gives advice on avoiding the risk of legionella infection originating from hot and cold water systems.

These two health notices supplement guidance issued in 1980, 1985, and 1986. (HN(80)39, HN(HAZARD)(85)6, HN(HAZARD)(86), and HN(86)16). In addition, we also intend to issue detailed Codes of Practice on the safe operation and maintenance of both cooling and hot and cold water systems, the first of which has already been issued to health authorities in draft. We are determined to ensure that all possible steps are taken to avoid any further outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease in hospitals or any other health care premises. Copies of the two health notices will be placed in the Library.

Similar guidance is being issued in Scotland and Wales.

Member's Correspondence

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth might receive a reply to his letter dated 24 March about Mr. D. Freestone of Rugby.

Mr. Lyell: I have written to my hon. Friend today.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth might receive a reply to his letter dated 26 March about Jeffrey Bernhard and Sons of Rugby.

Mr. Lyell: My Noble Friend has written to my hon. Friend today.

Research and Development

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his Department's planned expenditure on research and development for 1987-88; and what are the main areas of research selected by his Department under the Rothschild principles of the customer-contractor relationship.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to the reply*, 7 April 1987 *c. 206*]: Planned expenditure in 1987-88 on the main research programmes directly managed by the Department is:

	£ million
Health, Personal Social Services and Social Security	14·6
NHS Medical Equipment and Supplies	4·2
NHS Information Technology	4·0
NHS Building and Engineering	2·1

No decision has yet been taken as to the future priority areas for research.

Research

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will detail the research funded by his Department, and other research of which his Department is aware, into the loss of the senses of smell and taste.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 27 April 1987, c. *33*]: The Department is not currently funding any research into the loss of the senses of smell and taste.

The main Government-funded agency for the promotion of medical and related biological research in the United Kingdom is the Medical Research Council, which receives its grant-in-aid from the Department of Education and Science. The council is currently supporting the following projects relevant to these conditions or basic research which may prove to be relevant:

1. Dr. E. J. Rolls, Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford:
   i. The neurology of feeding and taste (1985-88).
   ii. Brain mechanisms of feeding — memory and perception (1986-89).
2. Dr. P. P. Robinson, Department of Physiology, University of Birmingham:
   The reinnervation of the tongue following lingual nerve injuries (1985-88).
3. Dr. E. B. Keverne, Department of Anatomy, University of Cambridge:
   Neural and neuroendocrine mechanisms of pheromonal activity (1986-89).
4. Professor P. D. Wall, Department of Anatomy, University College, London:
   Analysis of sensory signals in the nervous system (1972-87).
5. Dr. A. G. S. Lumsden, Department of Anatomy, United Medical and Dental Schools, Guys and St. Thomas' Hospitals, London:
   Mammalian peripheral neurogenesis: chemotactic guidance of primary sensory neurones by respective target ephithelia (1984-87).
6. Dr. A. M. Roberts, Department of Zoology, University of Bristol:
   Central synaptic pathways from sensory neurones with free nerve endings in frog embryos (1985-88).
7. Dr. A. M. Halliday, National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, London:
   Changes in cortical and subcortical evoked potentials inpatients with various lesions of the nervous system and sense organs.

National Insurance Credits

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of how many men aged 60 to 64 years are receiving National Insurance credits without being required to register as unemployed.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 May 1987, c. *376*]: Men aged 60-64 years may be awarded credits without being required to register as unemployed for periods when they receive incapacity benefit, invalid care allowance or supplementary benefit. In addition credits are awarded automatically each year to any other men in this age group who have less than a full record of contributions or credits. In 1984-85, the latest year available, the number of men receiving credits in these circumstances was 1·4 million.

NHS Capital Schemes

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his reply of 5 May relating to National Health Service capital schemes, if he will list all such information as is available to him in the form of his replies of 10 December 1985, *Official Report*, columns *613-4*.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *574*]: Following is a list of the 61 hospital developments of over £2 million completed since those given in appendix D to the National Health Service annual report 1985. Of these, nine, as indicated, were committed before June 1979. Similar information about developments listed in the 1985 National Health Service annual report was given in the previous reply on 10 December 1985.

Northern RHA
Fenham Blood Transfusion Service Centre
Hartlepool DGH—Scheme 3 Phase 1
Jarrow Community Hospital
Queen Elizabeth, Gateshead—Scheme 3 Phase 1

Yorkshire RHA
Bradford Royal Infirmary — Nucleus Wards and Theatres
Friarage Hospital—Phase 1 (Nucleus)
Regional Blood Transfusion Centre Seacroft—Phase 1
Scarborough DGH—Phase 1 (Nucleus)
Scunthorpe DGH—Phase 3A Service Centre
Staincliffe DGH—Energy Centre

Trent RHA
Derby City—Phase 1
Derby Royal Infirmary—Phase 2
Ilkeston Community Hospital
Kings Mill DGH—Phase 2
Lincoln County—Phases 1A and 1B
Lincoln County—Phase 1C—MIU
Northern General—Phase 1C
Pilgrim Hospital (Boston)—Phase 3—MIU

East Anglia RHA
West Suffolk (Bury St. Edmunds) Stage 1

North West Thames RHA
Hemel Hempstead Phase 1—Main block development
St. Charles Hospital[1]
St. Mary's W.2—Phase 1B

North East Thames RHA
Broomfield Ward Block
Clacton District—Phase 1 Stages 1 and 2
Colchester DGH—Phase 3 Residential
Harold Wood Hospital—Phase 1
Homerton Hospital—Phase 1[1]
Newham Hospital—Phase 2 (Nucleus)

South East Thames RHA
Archery House—M.H. Unit[1]
Bassetts Residential Centre—M.H. Services
Buckland DGH
Lewisham DGH—Phase 1A[1]

South West Thames RHA
St. Georges—Blocks G2 and F Phase 2[1]

Wessex RHA
Royal Hants County, Winchester—Phase 4 (Nucleus)[1]
Royal United, Bath—Ward Block

Oxford RHA
Heatherwood—MI/EMI
Wexham Park—EMI/MI
Wexham Park—Paediatric department and stores

South Western RHA
Bristol Eye Hospital[1]
Derriford DGH—Tower Block fitting out
West Somerset (Musgrove Park) DGH—Phase 1[1]
Weston-super-Mare New Hospital

West Midlands RHA
Bradwell New Geriatric Unit (Nucleus)
Bromsgrove/Redditch DGH — Phase 1 Contract 2 (Nucleus)[1]
George Eliot, Nuneaton—Phase 2 (Nucleus)
Good Hope—Phase 1
New Cross, Wolverhampton—Wards 1 and 2 (Nucleus)
Rubery Hill Regional Phsychiatric Intensive Care Unit
Walsgrave Radiotherapy Treatment Unit

Mersey RHA
Regional Stores

North Western RHA
Blackpool Victoria—Phase 4
Burnley General Hospital—Phase 3
Fairfield Catering and HSDU
Park Hospital—Geriatric and Rehabilitation
Queens Park Hospital, Blackburn—Phase 1 Paediatric
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Wigan—Phase 1

Non RHA
Blood Products Manufacturing Unit, Elstree
Central Public Health Laboratory, Colindale
Centre for Applied Microbiology, Porton Down
Clare Hall Project
Moorfields Eye Hospital, City Road development — Phase 1

[1] Health Building Schemes over £2 million completed after 1 January 1985 but committed before June 1979.

Information about the extent to which facilities are in full use is not held centrally. Although such details were given in reply to the hon. Member's question on 10 December 1985 at column *614*, the information obtained was by special inquiry of the regional health authorities concerned. It is no longer standard practice to seek information that is not routinely collected by the Department solely in order to answer parliamentary questions. The hon. Member may, therefore, wish to inquire of the appropriate regional health authorities direct.

Abortions

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each year since 1979 the total number of abortions on the National Health Service provided *(a)* in-house, *(b)* through charitable organisations and *(c)* through commercial organisations.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *131*]: The available information is shown in the table. Prior to 1981 the statistics on abortions carried out in non NHS premises do not identify separately those performed on NHS patients under agency arrangements. Hence it is not possible to provide data for charitable and commercial organisations for 1979 and 1980. For this purpose, charitable organisations are those registered as a charity with the Charity Commissioners, and the remainder are defined as commercial organisations.

Numbers of notifications of National Health Service (NHS) abortions carried out under the Abortion Act 1967 (a) on NHS premises (b) by charitable organizations and (c) by commercial organizations. Residents and non-Residents England and Wales 1979-86

Year	*NHS*	*Charitable*	*Commercial*
1979	55,767	n/a	n/a
1980	60,818	n/a	n/a
1981	61,276	1,477	866
1982	62,532	2,901	1,524
1983	62,817	2,870	1,750
1984	64,926	3,095	1,821
1985	65,254	3,820	2,118
1986[1]	67,529	4,479	2,360

[1] provisional
n/a not available

Benefit Claims

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide his latest available figure for the numbers of people claiming social security benefits for each Department of Health and Social Security office in Scotland.

Mr. Lyell [*pursuant to his reply,* 13 May 1987]: The following table shows the numbers of people claiming locally-administered social security benefits at the latest available date. Information about the centrally paid social security benefits, eg retirement pension, is not available on an office-by-office basis

Local Office	[1]*Sickness/ Invalidity Benefit*	[1]*Maternity Allowance*	[1]*Severe Disablement Allowance*	[2]*Industrial Disablement Benefit*	[3]*Supplementary Benefit*
Aberdeen North ILO	2,769	619	476	681	9,767
Aberdeen South ILO	2,475	378	658	704	9,645
Airdrie ILO	3,238	91	334	360	8,350
Arbroath ILO	1,383	226	338	359	6,988
Ayr ILO	3,393	279	495	647	15,546
Bellshill AO	—	—	—	—	6,908
Bathgate ILO	3,893	385	782	1,056	14,165
Campbeltown ILO	309	32	57	41	1,660
Clydebank ILO	1,824	99	346	305	7,381
Coatbridge AO	—	—	—	—	7,283
Coatbridge NIO	4,230	85	364	322	—
Cowdenbeath ILO	2,047	101	262	891	4,528
Cumbernauld ILO	3,937	258	1,429	847	10,703
Cumnock NIO	1,441	59	195	418	—
Dumbarton ILO	1,834	216	273	153	8,169
Dumfries ILO	2,375	286	574	623	8,509
Dundee East ILO	2,672	296	470	451	12,232
Dundee West ILO	3,160	256	841	452	10,763
Dunfermline ILO	2,213	325	688	643	5,897
East Kilbride ILO	2,347	182	234	233	6,326
Edinburgh City ILO	1,966	245	332	204	11,867
Edinburgh East ILO	2,232	271	584	867	11,188
Edinburgh North ILO	1,702	293	425	366	10,588
Edinburgh South ILO	2,728	357	848	1,148	11,101
Edinburgh West ILO	1,707	379	836	373	11,061
Elgin ILO	1,408	259	742	415	6,821
Falkirk ILO	4,376	356	1,403	1,020	14,275
Fort William ILO	436	55	60	76	2,790
Galashiels ILO	1,228	189	477	411	6,740
Glasgow Anniesland ILO	4,905	203	610	515	11,666
Glasgow Bridgeton ILO	2,587	79	234	194	8,501
Glasgow City ILO	2,270	68	202	184	9,239
Glasgow Craigton ILO	3,078	125	342	428	11,701
Glasgow Cranstonhill AO	—	—	—	—	2,096
Glasgow Laurieston ILO	4,908	341	436	141	15,709
Glasgow Maryhill ILO	2,816	186	242	263	13,695
Glasgow Parkhead ILO	4,080	126	546	314	11,966
Glasgow Partick AO	—	—	—	—	8,274
Glasgow Provan ILO	3,460	110	547	301	15,067
Glasgow Rutherglen ILO	4,008	130	314	406	14,857
Glasgow Southside ILO	3,437	254	497	377	14,162
Glasgow Springburn ILO	3,650	141	450	396	10,962
Greenock ILO	3,786	205	413	533	12,139
Hamilton ILO	7,857	308	1,123	914	16,360
Inverness ILO	2,111	368	595	394	12,018
Irvine ILO	3,688	211	534	412	13,154
Johstone ILO	2,633	248	618	294	7,834
Kilmarnock ILO	2,250	243	449	266	9,040
Kirkcaldy ILO	2,339	335	450	910	11,281
Lanark NIO	855	52	334	159	—
Lerwick ILO	219	76	93	63	1,163
Leven ILO	1,840	129	241	609	5,389
Motherwell ILO	4,885	137	387	353	12,450
Oban ILO	485	77	106	63	2,256
Paisley ILO	5,604	349	827	565	16,738

Local Office	[1]*Sickness/ Invalidity Benefit*	[1]*Maternity Allowance*	[3]*Severe Disablement Allowance*	[2]*Industrial Disablement Benefit*	[3]*Supplementary Benefit*
Perth ILO	1,810	362	592	450	9,125
Peterhead ILO	1,044	182	268	318	4,478
Port Glasgow ILO	1,666	86	256	526	5,385
Shotts NIO	1,502	29	193	276	—
Stirling ILO	3,952	296	604	1,093	11,027
Stornoway ILO	675	54	203	123	4,652
Stranraer ILO	824	63	149	92	3,129
Wick ILO	884	166	240	169	4,488
Wishaw NIO	4,339	122	425	504	—

Abbreviations: ILO = Integrated Local Office.
AO = Area Office
NIO = National Insurance Office

[1] As at 7 April 1987

[2] Figures quoted show the numbers of current awards of disablement benefit at local offices on 10 February 1987. More than one award may be in payment to an individual beneficiary at any one time.

[3] As at 10 February 1987.

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

NHS Estate

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the annual expenditure, in 1987 prices, from 1975-76 to date on repair, maintenance and improvement work on the English National Health Service estate; what is his Department's estimate of the expenditure needed to bring the condition of the English National Health Service estate to a fully reconditioned and repaired state, complying with up-to-date building standards, not including the reconditioning of parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or disposal, or the expected depreciation of the estate in the current financial year; what is his Department's estimate of the annual expenditure to prevent the English National Health Service estate's condition from deteriorating, excluding those parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or otherwise disposal; and what is the capital value of National Health Service buildings in England.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 13 May 1987]: The available information is as follows.

Hospital and community health service revenue expenditure on maintenance in England

	Building at 1987-88 prices £	*Engineering at 1987-88 prices £*	*Total at 1987-88 prices £*
1975-76	172,092	346,792	518,884
1976-77	158,064	240,066	398,130
1977-78	183,588	249,017	432,605
1978-79	186,876	255,845	442,721
1979-80	173,281	266,371	439,652
1980-81	188,749	277,741	466,490
1981-82	202,117	293,478	495,595
1982-83	190,415	295,126	485,541
1983-84	191,722	300,831	492,553
1984-85	190,998	300,327	491,325
1985-86	177,530	291,237	468,767
1986-87	n/y/a		

Information is not routinely collected on the cost of bringing the NHS estate in England up to the state as described in the question. Nor are separate estimates collected of the annual expenditure required to prevent deterioration. However, an exercise carried out in 1985 indicated that it would cost £1·7 billion to bring the whole estate up to a standard where the element was sound, operationally safe and exhibiting only minor deterioration. The capital value of the estate in England was given in my reply to the hon. Member on 4 February 1987 at column *702*.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 15 May 1987

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Loans and Grants

Mr. John Browne asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement as to whether Her Majesty's Government have put forward initiatives to extend their policy of transferring loans to poorer countries into grants.

Mr. Chris Patten: For several years Britain has had a generous policy of converting past aid loans into grants. Twenty-one of the poorest developing countries are benefiting from our retrospective terms adjustment policy at a total cost to the aid programme of nearly £1 billion. We are urging other donors to provide similar aid debt relief as part of the debt relief measures for the poorest and most indebted sub-Saharan African countries proposed by the Chancellor at the Interim Committee of the International Monetary Fund in April.

PRIME MINISTER

State Security

Mr. Williams asked the Prime Minister when she intends to reply to the letter dated 6 May from the right hon. Member for Swansea, West about her failure to notify the House that an inquiry into the security services was taking place.

The Prime Minister: I replied to the right hon. Gentleman earlier today.

Achievements

Mr. Allen McKay asked the Prime Minister if she will list her Government's achievements in *(a)* Yorkshire and Humberside, *(b)* Barnsley metropolitan district council area and *(c)* Barnsley, West and Penistone constituency since 1979 for each year to 1987; and if she will list by Government Departments the principal aid given to each area for each year since 1979.

The Prime Minister: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Private Security Services

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister how much has been paid by her office for services provided by private security companies in each of the past five years.

The Prime Minister: Nearly all security work for which my office pays is handled by other Government Departments. It is not possible to identify without disproportionate cost those items of work which have been carried out by private security companies on their behalf.

Heating and Lighting

Mr. Rost asked the Prime Minister if she will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties which she occupied; and if she will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

The Prime Minister: Electricity, gas and other fuel supplies are not separately metered for heating and lighting. Energy efficiency measures have concentrated on encouraging staff to abide by simple but effective no-cost measures that help reduce energy wastage.

CIVIL SERVICE

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Minister for the Civil Service what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Luce: This information is not held in my department and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Luce: Fuel and utilities are not separately metered for heating and lighting. Expenditure on energy efficiency measures is not readily available.

Cancer Screening (Government Departments)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Minister for the Civil Service what is Government policy in relation to the establishment of cancer screening facilities for female employees in Government Departments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Dissolution; therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Webber v Webber (Lord Chancellor's Correspondence)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Attorney-General if the Lord Chancellor will place in the Library copies of his correspondence with Mr. Justice Pickford on the case of Webber v Webber in the Blackwood county court; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor has not corresponded with His Honour Judge Pitchford on this case. There is no such person as Judge Pickford.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Attorney-General what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he and the Lord Chancellor, respectively, have responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

The Solicitor-General: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Attorney-General if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properities for which he and the Lord Chancellor, respectively, are directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

The Solicitor-General: My right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General is not responsible for any properties in the excercise of his functions.

Expenditure incurred during 1986-87 upon heating fuel, gas and electricity for properties in the Lord Chancellor's Department was £3,250,952. This does not include properties where the cost of heating and lighting is included in the rent, for which information is not available. Details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures are not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate costs.

TRANSPORT

Drinking and Driving

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list all the initiatives taken by his Department since 1979 to reduce the incidence of drinking and driving; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have implemented, under the Transport Act 1981, new provisions to improve the effectiveness of the law on drinking and driving by providing for the introduction of evidential breath testing; closing various loopholes which allowed suspects to avoid prosecution on legal technicalities; and extending police powers to require a roadside breath test to those who have been driving or have been in charge of a vehicle. The measures came into force in May 1983.

At the same time we introduced a new procedure to identify offenders suffering from a possible drinking problem. Under this drivers disqualified twice within 10 years at an alcohol level at least 2½ times above the legal limit cannot obtain a further driving licence until they have satisfied the Secretary of State that any drinking problem has been successfully treated.

We have initiated a new, more sustained, approach to drinking and driving publicity with the aim of making people aware of the dangers throughout the year. In addition to annual campaigns over the Christmas and New Year period, last year saw the first ever spring-summer publicity focus. Drinking and driving is now given overriding priority within our publicity programme throughout the year.

Last year we produced a leaflet "The Facts about Drinking and Driving". Over ¾ million copies have been distributed. A free road safety hot line (0800-234888) was also set up to provide help and advice on road safety matters, including drinking and driving. Over 6,000 calls have been handled on drinking and driving.

We have developed an education package for teenagers entitled "One for the Road". The Brewers' Society has supported the package by producing three films on alcohol and driving. There has been widespread dissemination of the package through courses for teachers and road safety officers.

Research is backing up all these initiatives. Accident figures show that since 1979 there as been a generally downward trend in the incidence of drinking and driving. There is also evidence of a greater awareness of the drinking and driving problem, and a hardening of attitudes against the drinking driver.

Much more needs to be done. We must continue to try and change people's attitudes. We are getting good support from outside bodies.

Ferries (Passenger Lists)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has yet reached any conclusions about the desirability of introducing legislation to require shipowners to maintain passenger lists for ferries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a difficult problem, and I am considering it very carefully. But I do not want to rush to a conclusion.

Motorways (Overtaking Lanes)

Dame Jill Knight asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to encourage motorway users to adhere to rule 165 of the Highway Code about not travelling continuously in the fast overtaking lanes.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. The Department takes every opportunity to remind motorists that they should use the outer lanes of motorways for overtaking only. Since June 1985 some 32 million leaflets on lane discipline have been issued with vehicle excise duty reminders. Experimental "Keep Left" signs have been installed on the M1. Their impact is being monitored.

A38 (Signposts)

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will take steps to ensure the signposting of Kingsbridge, Salcombe and Dartmouth on existing signposts from the A38 on both east and westbound carriageways;

(2) if he will take steps to ensure that South Hams be signposted on the A38 at the foot of Haldon/Telegraph Hill on the approach to the split of the A38 and A380 to Torquay, before the start of the tourist season;

(3) if he will take steps to ensure that white on brown tourist signposts highlighting the existence of South Hams are erected on the A38 westbound carriageway;

(4) if he will take steps to ensure the signposting of Kingsbridge, Salcombe and Dartmouth on existing signposts from the A38 on the westbound carriageway only;

(5) if he will take steps to ensure that Kingsbridge, Salcombe and the east of Ivybridge are signposted from the A38 at the Wrangaton junction, before the start of the tourism season;

(6) if he will take steps to ensure that Salcombe and Dartmouth are signposted from the A38 at the Buckfastleigh junction, before the start of the tourist season.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are having discussions with Devon county council about the signposting on the A38 of destinations in South Hams.

We hope to have amended signs in place before the peak holiday season. Kingsbridge is already signposted.

South Hams, which is a district, will not be signposted.

London Residuary Body (VAT)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will detail the outstanding amounts of value added tax payable by his Department for work carried out by the London Residuary Body.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: About £3,500 is outstanding in respect of work done by LRB on certain ex-GLC road schemes. The liability for VAT on residuary body work in respect of urban traffic control systems is currently under discussion with HM Customs and Excise.

Driving Licence Abuse

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Leicester, East of 6 April, *Official Report*, column 40, he has received any further representations relating to alleged driving licence abuse.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No.

Severn Crossing

Mr. Roy Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the currently proposed route of the second Severn crossing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We announced last July that the second Severn crossing will be sited at the English Stones about three miles downstream of the existing crossing, with connedtons to the M4 on both banks and with an additional southerly link to the M5.

The general alignments of the approach routes and likely motorway interchange locations were shown on a map attached to the July 1986 announcement, and also in the Consultant's Report, which was placed in the Commons Library. Considerable detailed work will have to be done before these can be located or described with more precision.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibilitiy; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Moore: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Sectetary of State for Transport if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Moore: Total spending on heating and lighting in 1986-87 in my Department's buildings was £2,944,000.

This represents a reduction of almost 4 per cent. on the previous year, in part achieved with the help of energy efficiency measures costing some £15,000.

Pilotage

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give reasons for the omission of any reference to the Harbours Act in paragraph 2 of the White Paper on the pilotage system.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The White Paper referred to the main legislation currently governing marine pilotage. No Harbours Act falls within that category.

Buses

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the effect of bus deregulation within the city of Leicester.

Mr. David Mitchell: Bus deregulation was introduced smoothly in Leicester with previous service levels being broadly maintained. There are signs of healthy competition between the main operators and minibuses are now operating successfully in the City.

London Taxi Fares

Mr. Bendall asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make a statement about London taxi fares.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Secretary of State has made an Order increasing London taxi fares by about 5·5 per cent. on average with effect from Sunday 21 June 1987. The new tariff will incorporate a minimum fare of 80p (including an unchanged hire charge of 40p) for the first 924 yards or 3 minutes 18 seconds. The rate will then be 20p for every 462 yards or 1 minute 39 seconds up to 6 miles and 20p for each 308 yards or 66 seconds thereafter. The surcharge for hirings made on Boxing Day has been increased to £2·00 in line with the surcharge applicable on Christmas Day and new year's eve.

Motorways (Lane Closures)

Mr. Cash asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will establish an inquiry into the numbers and positioning of cones on the M1 and M6 motorways; what steps are taken to ensure that the use of cones is kept to a minimum; what assessment he has made of the cost to commerce of delays caused by motorway lanes being coned off; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Safety Fences

Mr. Andrew MacKay asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to change the specification for welded angled beams for safety fences and the requirements for the routine inspection and maintenance of safety fences.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. The current specification for the manufacture of welded angled beams, issued in 1985, is being replaced with one for formed beams that do not require welding. This change will avoid the problems that have occurred with some existing welded beams. The new specification will apply initially to contracts for new work and maintenance. The need for more extensive replacement of existing welded beams will be assessed when detailed investigations of these beams, currently in progress, are complete. The Department will shortly be inviting comments on a revised specification for welded beams, which may be adopted in future in addition to that for formed beams.

The Department's code of practice for routine maintenance has been amended to increase the frequency of inspections to safety fences. The copy of the code in the Library has been amended accordingly. Some planned inspections are also being brought forward.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Deprivation

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish the new proposed index of regional deprivation prepared for the European Communities.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The European Commission is expected shortly to complete its third periodic report on the social and economic situation and development of the regions of the Community. I understand that this will include a table of values of a synthetic index purporting to measure the intensity of regional problems in each region of the Community.

The publication of the Commission's report will be a matter for the Commission itself.

British Telecom (Share Flotation)

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will update his answer of 20 January 1986, *Official Report*, column *16*, regarding British Telecom shareholders showing also the position following flotation.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The position directly following the flotation in 1984 was as follows;

Size of holdings	*Number of holdings*	*Per cent. of total*	*Number of shares in (millions)*	*Per cent. of total*
(i) 1-399	525,698	24·5	104	1·7
(ii) 400-799	965,509	45·1	443	7·4
(iii) 800-1,599	629,432	29·4	505	8·4
(iv) 1,600-1,000,000 and more	21,008	1·0	4,948	82·5
Totals	2,141,647	100	6,000	100

Category (iv) includes the Government shareholding of 2,988 million shares, or 49·8 per cent. of total shares.

As my previous answer made clear, this is properly a matter for British Telecom. Its 1986 annual report gives the most recent available figures on categories of shareholdings. A copy of this is available in the Library of the House.

IDB (Winding-up)

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he intends to apply in the courts for a winding-up petition in the case of IDB.

Mr. Giles Shaw: IDB's licence under the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958 to deal in securities was revoked on 1 May. My right hon. Friend will exercise the other powers available to him if he considers the circumstances make it right to do so.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The information is not readily available in the form requested and cannot be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Giles Shaw: A reply could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Regional Aid

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will provide figures for the amounts spent, by region, and in Scotland and Wales, on regional selective assistance in 1986-87; and if he will give estimates for 1987-88.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Provisional figures for payments of Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) in 1986-87 are as follows:

Area	*£ million*
North East	18·3
North West	19·3
Yorkshire and Humberside	9·8
East Midlands	2·3
West Midlands	9·7
South West	5·2

Area	*£ million*
Scotland	35·4
Wales	26·6
Great Britain Total	126·6

Provision for expenditure on RSA in 1987-88, as set out in the Supply Estimates, is as follows:

	£ million
England	89·3
Scotland	46·8
Wales	36·1
	172·2

Notes:

(1) RSA has been interpreted as industrial and training grants.

(2) All figures are gross, before deducting recoveries and EC receipts.

(3) Estimates for future RSA expenditure are produced only for England as a whole and are not broken down by region.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Central America

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will give an assurance that the future presence of British troops stationed in Belize will not be affected by the talks between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Belize and the Government of Guatemala.

Mr. Eggar: As I informed the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on 5 May, the British garrison will remain in Belize for an appropriate period.

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs at the request of which Government the talks between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Belize and the Government of Guatemala are to take place.

Mr. Eggar: The Governments of Belize and Guatemala had both publicly made clear their willingness to hold talks in advance of the recent meeting on 29 April 1987 about which I answered a question from the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on 5 May at column *324*. British officials attended as observers.

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on the purpose and agenda of the negotiations between Her Majesty's Government, the Government of Belize and the Government of Guatemala.

Mr. Eggar: The purpose of the talks was to seek a negotiated settlement of the differences between the Governments of Belize and Guatemala. British officials attended as observers.

Private Security Services

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been paid by his Department for services provided by private security companies in each of the past five years.

Mr. Eggar: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office employs private security companies in the United Kingdom and a number of its posts overseas. Detailed information is not kept in a centralised form and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Diego Garcia

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Mauritius concerning the future of the people of Diego Garcia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: None. The Government of Mauritius, assisted by the operations of a trust fund to which the Government contributed £4 million in 1982, is responsible for future arrangements relating to the workers from the abandoned plantations on Diego Garcia, and has been active, inter alia, in providing land for housing.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of the United States concerning the use of Diego Garcia by their forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: None. However, Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials consult periodically with their United States counterparts as required by paragraph 1(3) of the 1976 Exchange of Notes (Cmnd. 6413).

Asylum Seekers (Kurds)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have been held with representatives of the Government of Syria concerning the treatment of Kurdish people who seek asylum from Iraq.

Mr. Renton: None.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested by my hon. Friend is not readily available and could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Eggar: The cost of providing heating, lighting and power for non-specialised use in the properties for which my right hon. and learned Friend is directly responsible in the United Kingdom was £1,014,000.

Energy efficiency measures have been carried out by the PSA as part of their responsibility for maintenance and minor new works in these buildings.

Two part-time energy managers have been appointed at no additional cost.

The information requested by my hon. Friend in respect of the properties for which my right hon. and learned Friend is directly responsible overseas is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Ugandan Asians

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current position regarding outstanding compensation claims for those Ugandan Asians living in Leicester who are currently in dispute with the Government of Uganda.

Mr. Eggar: We have raised this matter repeatedly with the Ugandan authorities at the highest level, most recently when my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) visited Uganda in December 1986. We understand that in March this year a new chairman was appointed to the Ugandan verification committee, set up under the Expropriated Properties Act in 1982 to examine claims. This post had been vacant since 1985. We are continuing to urge the Ugandan authorities to resolve these matters as soon as possible.

ENERGY

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Peter Walker: This information is not held by my Department but I have asked Chairmen of the appropriate public bodies to write to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department does not have direct responsibility for the heating in our main building, where we are tenants. Total expenditure on heating and lighting for my Department's main building during 1986-87 was £112,192 and my Department's share of fuel bills for buildings where it is a minority occupant was £35,649. Over the same period my Department spent some £13,000 on a major draughtproofing programme and other energy efficiency measures in its main building and achieved a 7 per cent. saving in electricity consumption.

Electricity (Temple and Bolventor)

Mr. Neale asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has reached a decision on the requisitions for electricity supply to Temple and Bolventor on Bodmin moor; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: My right hon. Friend has now considered all aspects of the South Western electricity board's appeals against the two requisitions but, before making the orders to determine them, he has given the board and the requisitioners an opportunity to comment on the way in which he is minded to do so.

THE ARTS

Nitrate Project 200 Campaign

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a grant to the Nitrate Project 200 Campaign to increase the speed at which film prints on nitrate stock can be saved.

Mr. Luce: I already fund the National Film Archive through the British Film Institute. The preservation of film stock in private ownership is not a matter for me.

DEFENCE

Advertisements

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions his Department sponsored advertisements in national newspapers in the last three years; which newspapers were chosen for these campaigns; which local newspapers were used in these campaigns; and which newspaper publishing groups received payment for advertising space.

Mr. Freeman: This information is not readily available and would entail disproportionate time and effort to produce.

Northern Ireland (Army Discipline)

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth might receive a reply to his letter dated 10 April about the way in which disciplinary matters are pursued in the Army in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Freeman: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 12 May.

Nimrod MR2 Aircraft

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the nuclear role of the Nimrod MR2 aircraft in Royal Air Force service.

Mr. Stanley: As stated in paragraph 404 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1986" (Cmnd. 9763-I) RAF Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft can deliver US depth bombs against submarines.

RAF Finningley (Exercise)

Mr. Redmond asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the contingencies which the exercise at Royal Air Force Finningley on 24 to 25 March was designed to meet; whether the exercise was part of a nationwide series of exercises; whether the exercise involved members of the home service force; what steps were taken to inform local residents in advance of the exercise; and if he will list the local authority representatives informed in advance.

Mr. Stanley: RAF stations routinely test their operational capability by means of exercises such as that held at Finningley on 24-25 March. In accordance with normal practice, advance notice of this exercise was given to the local police and the residents in the immediate vicinity of the station. Only RAF personnel took part in the exercise.

RAF Aircrew

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has to offer signing on payments or bounties to Royal Air Force aircrew at the end of their engagement to remain in the Royal Air Force.

Mr. Freeman: None; however RAF terms and conditions of service are kept under review.

Foxhunter Radar Project

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to how many personnel have been transferred to Marconi plc from GEC Avionics to work on the Foxhunter radar project; and if it still has the same project management.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: These are matters for the company but I understand that there have been important changes at senior management level in relation to this project.

Private Security Companies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been paid by his Department for services provided by private security companies in each of the past five years.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information requested cannot be provided without disproportionate time and effort.

"British Defence Policy"

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cost of producing the 1987 edition of the booklet, "British Defence Policy;" when they were printed; what was the print-run for 1987 and 1986; what was the cost for each year; and how many copies of the edition prior to 1987 remain undistributed.

Mr. Stanley: The cost of producing the 1987 edition of the booklet, "British Defence Policy," is £72,766 including VAT but excluding staff costs and the costs of distribution. 85,000 are being printed, of which 5,000 were delivered from the printer on 5 May, 20,000 on 14 May, and the remainder will be delivered by the end of May. On the same basis of costing, the 1986 edition cost £54,082 and had a print-run of 35,000 of which at 5 May 1987 there were about 150 undistributed. There was also an outstanding demand for over 35,000.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The answer can not be provided without disproportionate cost and effort.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information sought is not readily available.

Northern Ireland (Service Men)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance is given to commanding officers concerning the type of duties which 18-year-old service men are expected to carry out in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Members of the Armed Forces who are aged 18 are considered to be adult service personnel and are expected to carry out all duties while serving in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the minimum age for those serving in Her Majesty's forces to be sent to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The minimum age for members of the Armed Forces serving in Northern Ireland is 17½. Service men aged less than 18 years are not expected to carry out duties of an operational nature.

Neutron Warheads (Exercises)

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if there are any plans for British forces to participate in exercises in which neutron warheads are involved; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if British forces have at any time participated in exercises involving neutron warheads; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: I will write to the right hon. Gentleman.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Corporation Tax

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the increase in the yield of corporation tax in a full financial year from abolishing relief in respect of past losses; and if he will provide a break-down by sector.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Use of accumulated tax losses is estimated to have reduced CT receipts by some £1-2 billion in 1986-87, excluding the public sector. A breakdown by sector could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the increase in the yield of corporation tax in a full financial year from disallowing interest on borrowed money as a cost; and if he will provide a break-down by sector.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The yield would depend upon the precise nature of the proposal: for example, whether the interest receipts of lending institutions remained taxable, and whether the proposals extended to the public sector, building societies and unincorporated businesses. The proposal would induce significant behavioural changes on the part of lenders and borrowers which would also affect the yield.

Estimates of company interest payments, consolidated by sector, are available in the 1986 edition of United Kingdom National Accounts.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the increase in revenue from corporation tax in a full financial year from abolishing capital and depreciation allowances; and if he will provide a breakdown by sector.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Estimates of the reduction in 1986-87 corporation tax liabilities resulting from the existence of capital allowances were published in the Public Expenditure White Paper (Cm 56-II).

A breakdown by sector beyond those given in the White Paper is not readily available.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Mates asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the contracts, with the subject of the assignment, awarded to management consultancy or accounting firms by the Treasury, Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue in 1986, with the name of the consultants concerned.

Mr. Brooke: the information requested for the Treasury was given in response to the question of the hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on 18 February 1987 at column *675*.

The management consultancy contracts awarded by the Inland Revenue in 1986 were:

(i) The development of manpower planning techniques—Institute of Manpower Studies;

(ii) the development of personnel planning techniques—Institute of Manpower Studies;

(iii) development of financial costing and modelling systems—Peat, Marwick, McLintock.

The Department continued to receive assistance during 1986 from Peat, Marwick, McLintock on the development of financial management techniques and on clerical work measurement in tax offices.

In addition, the Department also used consultancy services in a wide range of areas, including information technology, operational research and public and staff relations, which, while not falling within the general classification of management consultancy, have some similarity to it.

Customs and Excise do not maintain central records of such contracts. An exhaustive check would involve disproportionate time and effort, but the following have been identified:

(i) advice on a systems testing strategy—BIS Applied Systems;

(ii) a study of computer terminal strategy — Peat, Marwick, McLintock;

(iii) a study of communications network strategy—Peat, Marwick, McLintock;

(iv) a study in the VAT area of data capture and measures of achievement—Arthur Andersen & Co;

(v) a study on the potential use of certain commercial accounting packages—Peat, Marwick, McLintock.

Capital Taxes

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the percentage increase in real terms of the threshold for exemption from capital gains tax since 1978-79; and if he will list the annual cost of changes to the exemption made since 1978-79.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In real terms, the percentage increase between April 1978 and April 1987 is 219 per cent. The cost of each change to the exemption since 1978-79 can be found in the relevant "Financial Statement and Budget Report". The 1980-81 cost includes the effect of other changes whose cost cannot be distinguished.

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list concessions made on capital gains tax and capital transfer tax since 1978-79; and what is his latest estimate of their cost.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The yield of inheritance tax on capital transfers in 1987-88 is estimated to be about £350 million lower than if the 1978-79 capital transfer tax regime, with the threshold and rate band limits indexed in line with movements in retail prices, had remained in force. On the same basis, the yield of capital gains tax on gains realised by individuals and trusts in 1987-88 is estimated to be about £1,100 million lower than with the indexed 1978-79 regime. These estimates make no allowance for possible changes in the basis for these taxes which might result from changes in the structure and rates of tax.

Details of the changes to these taxes will be found in the annual Finance Acts.

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the annual cost of indexation relief on capital gains tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: About £600 million at the level of capital gains expected to be realised by individuals and trusts during 1987-88.

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the annual cost of the abolition of capital transfer tax on lifetime gifts.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The latest estimate is that published in the "Financial Statement and Budget Report 1986-87" (page 51, paragraph 40*(a)*).

Pensions

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement identifying those pensions received as a result of industrial injury or work-related illness which are subject to tax relief.

Mr. Lawson: I refer the right hon. Member to the Inland Revenue press release entitled "Inland Revenue Extra-Statutory Concessions" which was issued on 8 August 1986. A copy is available in the House of Commons library. The annex entitled "Pensions to disabled employees" sets out the circumstances in which pensions received by persons disabled at work are no taxed.

Personal Wealth Distribution

Mr. Nellist asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update his answer to the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East of 20 May 1985, *Official Report*, columns *339-40*, on the distribution of personal wealth.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Provisional estimates for 1983 and 1984 and revised estimates for 1980, 1981 and 1982 will be found in table 4.8 of "Inland Revenue Statistics 1986", a copy of which is in the Library.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period;

(2) if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Brooke: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Civil Servants (Leicester)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total number of civil servants working within the city of Leicester; if he will break this figure down into departments giving the figures for 1979, 1983 and 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I regret that it has not bee possible to provide an answer before Dissolution; therefore, I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

European Commission

Mr. Fallon asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the European Commission's latest cash position and the implications for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Brooke: The European Commission estimates that its spending obligations this month will again exceed available revenues under the budget for 1987.

The Commission have therefore requested member states to advance from June into May the payment of own resources other than VAT in accordance with Article 10(2) of Council Regulation 2891/77: a similar advance was made last month. The Government are satisfied that this request is within the vires of Article 10(2) and accordingly will make an advance payment on 20 May of £146 million from the Consolidated Fund under section 2(3) of the European Communities Act, 1972. The payment of levies and duties on 22 June will be reduced by the amount of the advance.

The Commission have also informed us that it has to overdraw its accounts with member states in May in accordance with Article 12(2) of Council Regulation 2891/77. The amount involved for the United Kingdom is expected to be of the order of £285 million. The Government are meeting this obligation from the Consolidated Fund in accordance with section 2(3) of the European Communities Act, 1972. Repayment of drawings made under this facility will be made by deduction from our June own resources payments.

Neither of these facilities involve increasing the total amounts which the Community is authorised to spend during 1987. There is therefore no net addition to public expenditure.

Eurotunnel

Mr. Fallon asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will report on the outcome of the recent meeting of the European Investment Bank's board of directors with respect to a possible European Investment Bank loan to Eurotunnel.

Mr. Brooke: The EIB's Board of Directors agreed on Tuesday 12 May to lend Eurotunnel the equivalent of £1 billion or 10 billion French francs for the Channel tunnel. The text of the EIB's press notice, issued on Wednesday 13 May, is as follows:

At its meeting yesterday, the Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank agreed to lend Eurotunnel the equivalent of a total £1 billion-FF 10 billion (approximately 1·4 billion ECUs) for the Channel tunnel. This decision has been taken in the light of the EIB's independent review of the technical, economic, and financial viability of the project. The EIB regards the Channel tunnel as a project of exceptional importance to the development of the Community's transport network, and a stimulus to the European economy.

EIB funding will be made available, through co-financing arrangements, in association with a syndicate of international banks led by National Westminster, Credit Lyonnais, Banque Nationale de Paris, Midland and Banque Indosuez. The EIB's loans will be secured by guarantees provided by the participating banks until the successful completion of the project and thereafter by a charge on the project assets and revenues. No Government funds or guarantees are involved.

The EIB loans will primarily be at fixed interest rates and for a range of maturities of up to 25 years. They will be phased over the project's six-year construction period (1988-1993). The terms will reflect prevailing market conditions.

The conclusion of contractual arrangements for the loans between the EIB and Eurotunnel will be subject to passage of the necessary legislation, the finalisation of arrangements with the railways, and successful completion of bank syndication and the forthcoming equity issues.

Unearned Income

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the annual saving to the Exchequer from unearned income paid abroad if the tax credit was raised from 27 per cent. to 35 per cent.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply,* 30 April 1987, c. *232*]: A system involving a rate of tax credit and ACT 8 percentage points above the basic rate of income tax and the small companies rate of CT would be administratively complex and could lead to a substantial loss to the Exchequer generally as well as in the specific case of unearned income paid abroad.

WALES

Maintained Schools

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the annual expenditure, in 1987 prices, from 1975-76 to date on repair, maintenance and improvement work on maintained schools in Wales; what is his Department's estimate of the expenditure needed to bring the condition of maintained schools in Wales to a fully reconditioned and repaired state, complying with up-to-date building standards, not including the reconditioning of those schools for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or otherwise disposal, or the expected depreciation of school buildings in the current financial year; what is his Department's estimate of the annual expenditure to prevent the condition of maintained schools in Wales from deteriorating, excluding those schools for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or otherwise disposal; and what is the capital value of maintained school buildings in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Expenditure on repair, maintenance and improvement work on maintained schools in Wales since 1975-76 revalued to 1986-87 prices, is given in the table:

	£'000
1975-76	22,387
1976-77	21,106
1977-78	21,765
1978-79	24,738
1979-80	23,698
1980-81	23,756
1981-82	22,376
1982-83	22,899
1983-84	26,212
1984-85	23,043
1985-86	23,128

Notes:

Before 1981-82 expenditure on maintenance of school buildings was included with expenditure on the maintenance of school grounds. The figures have been adjusted to exclude assumed expenditure on maintenance of school grounds.

In addition certan expenditure on repairs, maintenance and improvement may be met from capital allocations but this is not separately identifiable.

Responsibility for al such work on maintaned schools lies with the Local Education Authorities and the other detailed information requested is not held centrally.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Raffan asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether any areas in Wales are intended to be designated as environmentally sensitive areas during the next year.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Yes. It is our intention to extend the existing Cambrian Mountains environmentally sensitive area and to designate the Lleyn Peninsula. Details of the schemes have yet to be finalised but interested organisations in both areas will be consulted before the schemes are introduced.

Schools (Languages)

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many state schools in Wales teach, as a compulsory subject, Latin or Greek.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The information is not available centrally.

NHS (Staff)

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many staff have been employed by the National Health Service in Wales for each year since 1979, expressed as whole-time equivalents as well as actual full-time and part-time numbers in the following categories: *(a)* nurses and midwives, *(b)* ancilliaries, *(c)* administrative and clerical and *(d)* professional and technical.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The required information, which relates to 30 September each year, is given in the tables:

	Numbers of Staff		
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Whole-time equivalents*
(a) Nursing and Midwifery Staff–NHS Wales including WHCSA			
[1]1979	16,275	11,228	23,031
1980	16,902	11,792	24,366
1981	17,946	11,785	25,362
1982	18,390	11,956	25,909
1983	18,583	11,745	25,981
1984	19,005	11,751	26,448
1985	19,486	11,965	27,014
1986	19,553	12,123	27,187
(b) Ancillary Staff–NHS Wales including WHCSA			
1979	7,602	7,307	11,879
1980	7,593	7,606	11,989
1981	7,381	7,728	11,839
1982	7,240	7,954	11,784
1983	7,045	7,897	11,559
1984	6,498	7,806	10,964
1985	6,212	8,009	10,757
1986	5,797	7,847	10,210
(c) Administrative and Clerical Staff– NHS Wales including WHCSA			
1979	5,259	1,584	6,221
1980	5,376	1,631	6,279
1981	5,409	1,676	6,390
1982	5,437	1,755	6,437
1983	5,481	1,779	6,481
1984	5,545	1,879	6,626
1985	5,589	2,067	6,787
1986	5,600	2,244	6,924
(d) Professional and Technical Staff–NHS Wales including WHCSA			
1979	3,197	963	3,621
1980	3,370	1,005	3,737
1981	3,448	1,059	3,849
1982	3,615	1,079	4,018
1983	3,786	1,078	4,161
1984	3,904	1,104	4,466
1985	4,070	1,152	4,649
1986	4,123	1,274	4,771

[1] In 1979, standard contract hours for this staff group were 40 hours per week; this was reduced to 37·5 hours for 1980 and subsequent years.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: During 1986-87 the Welsh Office spent £487,000 on heating and lighting. Energy conservation is primarily the responsibility of the Property Services Agency and my Department does not hold information about expenditure on energy efficiency schemes.

National Museum of Wales

Mr. Faulds asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to *(a)* the receipts raised by the national museum of Wales from the recent exhibition of masterpieces of that museum in Japan, *(b)* the net sum made available from that amount for museum purposes after deducting expenses and internal costs, *(c)* the museum purposes to which that net sum was devoted and *(d)* the sum made available therefrom for equipment for the museum's conservation studios.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Receipts were £200,000 gross and £190,000 net after taking account of direct expenses only. In accordance with current practice for the national museums and galleries, receipts are applied to meet general expenditure and are not earmarked for specific projects.

Enterprise Zone, Delyn

Mr. Raffan asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the total amount of public resources invested in the Delyn enterprise zone since its designation.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Since designation, it is estimated that, overall, some £10 million has been invested in the development of the Delyn enterprise zone by the Welsh Office, Welsh Development Agency and Delyn borough council. In addition support from the European Regional Development Fund has totalled £1 million.

Roads (Delyn)

Mr. Raffan asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the number and cost of the trunk road construction projects in the Delyn constituency *(a)* completed since 1983, and *(b)* planned for the next five years.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Information for major (ie over £1 million) schemes is as follows:

Completed since 1983	*Opened*	*Estimated cost £ million*
A55 Holywell By-pass (Stage 2)	October 1986	20·2

Planned	*Estimated start*	*Estimated cost £ million*
A55 Northop By-pass	Before December 1987	11·3
A55 Travellers' Inn Improvement	January 1988-December 1990	3·8
A494 Mold By-pass	January 1988-December 1990	7·5

Hospitals

Mr. Raffan asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the total cost of *(a)* the building of Mold community hospital, *(b)* the conversion of Chatsworth House hospital, Prestatyn, and *(c)* the improvements to the out-patients department and wards of Holywell cottage hospital.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The cost information requested is as follows:

	£
Mold Community Hospital	1,907,000
Chatsworth House Hospital Conversion	248,000
Holywell Cottage Hospital Out-patients Department	118,500

Mr. Raffan asked the Secretary of State for Wales what plans there are to carry out improvements to Flint cottage hospital.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I understand that the Clwyd Health Authority has plans to carry out improvements to Flint cottage hospital as part of their continuing programme for the implementation of the District's community health care strategy.

Welsh National Health Service Estate

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the annual expenditure, in 1987 prices, from 1975-76 to date on repair, maintenance and improvement work on the Welsh National Health Service estate: what is his Department's estimate of the expenditure needed to bring the condition of the Welsh National Health Service estate to a fully reconditioned and repaired state, complying with up-to-date building standards, not including the reconditioning of parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or disposal, or the expected depreciation of the estate in this financial year; what is his Department's estimate of the annual expenditure to prevent the Welsh National Health Service estate's condition from deteriorating, excluding those parts of the estate for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper cource is demolition or otherwise disposal; and what is the capital value of National Health Service buildings in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson [*pursuant to his reply,* 13 May 1987]: Information is not collected on a routine basis either on the cost of bringing the NHS estate in Wales up to the condition described in the question or on the annual expenditure required to prevent deterioration. However, an exercise carried out in 1984 indicated that it would cost £99 million to bring the whole estate up to a standard where it was sound, operationally safe and exhibiting only minor deterioration. The capital value of the estate in Wales was given to the hon. Gentleman on 4 February 1987.

The revenue expenditure on maintenance of NHS estate in Wales is shown in the table:

Revenue Expenditure on the NHS Estate in Wales: 1987 Constant Prices

£000

Financial Year	*Building Maintenance Expenditure*	*Engineering Maintenance Expenditure*	*Total: Building and Engineering Maintenance Expenditure*
1975-76	9,626	21,381	31,006
1976-77	9,311	13,595	22,906
1977-78	10,931	15,368	26,299
1978-79	10,923	16,907	27,830
1979-80	10,773	16,921	27,695
1980-81	10,495	16,054	26,549
1981-82	11,919	18,155	30,074
1982-83	18,504	14,021	32,525
1983-84	13,479	18,608	32,087
1984-85	12,805	18,410	31,215
1985-86	12,948	18,396	31,344

Source: Summary of NHS Annual Accounts.

ENVIRONMENT

Homelessness

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many households have been accepted as homeless, by each local authority, for each year from 1979 to 1986.

Mr. Tracey: I have today placed in the Library, tables giving the numbers of households for whom local authorities in England reported accepting responsibility for securing accommodation during each year from 1981 to 1986. Information for the years 1979 and 1980 is available in "Local Housing Statistics" issues No. 54 (table 14), 59 (table 9) and 62 (table 13), copies of which are in the Library. A new reporting system was introduced for non-metropolitan districts in the fourth quarter of 1980 and for metropolitan districts and the London boroughs in the third quarter of 1982, so that the figures are not directly comparable over the whole period.

London Docklands

Mr. Mikardo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of houses and flats built on London Docklands Development Corporation owned land between January 1986 and December 1986 were sold for *(a)* over £40,000 and *(b)* over £100,000.

Mr. John Patten: Houses and flats sold on LDDC-owned sites between 1 April and 31 December 1986 can be subdivided as follows:

	Per cent.
Houses over £40,000	85
of which:	
Homes over £100,000	4

Similar information for the first quarter of 1986 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council House Sales (Leicester)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses have been sold within the city of Leicester since the Government's right-to-buy legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: Reported sales of dwellings by Leicester city council appear in the following issues of "Local Housing Statistics" which are available in the Library.

Financial Years	*Issue Number*
1980-81	62
1981-82	63
1982-83	67
1983-84	75
1984-85 and 1985-86	79

Leicester city council has reported selling 461 dwellings in the first three quarters of 1986-87, of which 460 were under the right-to-buy scheme implemented in the Housing Act 1980.

Leicester

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the total amount of funds given in each year since 1979 through the inner area programme to the city of Leicester; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The information is as follows:

Leicester: Urban Programme Resources Allocated for the Year Specified

Year	*£ million*
1979-80	2·78
1980-81	3·38
1981-82	4·16
1982-83	5·77
1983-84	6·50
1984-85	5·70
1985-86	5·83
1986-87	5·43
1987-88	[1]5·43

[1] Provisional allocation.

Brookwood Lye Action Group

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has yet received the information he needs to complete his consideration of the Brookwood Lye Action Group's request for reimbursement of the costs incurred by it at the abortive first public inquiry relating to land at Brookwood Lye, Woking.

Mr. Tracey: A letter was sent to the action group on 13 May setting out the proposed basis of reimbursement. Substantiation of the action group's costs will be needed but we hope that the matter can now be settled quickly.

LDDC (Leyes Road, Custom House)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment for what purposes a compulsory purchase notice has been made by the London Docklands Development Corporation for allotment plots adjacent to Leyes Road, Custom House, currently held by members of the West Ham allotment association; what number of plots is required for each permanent and temporary purpose, respectively; and what alternative plans were investigated that would not involve permanent or temporary use of these plots.

Mr. John Patten: The London Docklands Developments Corporation (Connaught Crossing, Newham) Compulsory Purchase Order, made on 21 April 1987, is to enable the contruction of a road link between the Royal Albert and Royal Victoria docks. Nineteen plots of the allotment site adjacent to Leyes road, Customs House, are affected by the order, of which 13 are occupied. Four of the plots, of which one is occupied, would be permanently lost. Fifteen slightly smaller plots would remain in beneficial use.

The corporation considered and rejected earlier designs for the road scheme which would have taken more of the allotment land than is now proposed.

Inner Area Programme (Newham)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish his decision concerning the application of the London borough of Newham of December 1986 in respect of the inner area programme for the financial year 1987-88.

Mr. Tracey: A decision will not now be made until after the general election.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of sites of special scientific interest in each grade of agricultural land.

Mr. Waldegrave: This information is not readily available and could not be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

Canford Heath, Dorset

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state the nature of the special interest by reason of which the Nature Conservancy Council has designated Canford Heath, Dorset, as a site of special scientific interest; if Canford Heath has been identified for designation as a special protection area under EC directive 79/409 on the conservation of wild birds; and if he will state his policy towards the protection of sites of special scientific interest and special protection areas, against operations likely to damage the special interest of such sites.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Canford heath site of special scientific interest supports communities of plants and animals typical of Dorset heathland, including a number of rare and protected species. I understand the Nature Conservancy Council intends to recommend the Poole basin, of which Canford heath forms a part, as a special protection area under directive 79/409/EEC.

Sites of special scientific interest notified under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (which include special protection areas) are statutorily protected under the terms of that Act. The Nature Conservancy Council must be consulted in connection with development proposals in such sites to ensure that the conservation interests can be fully taken into account when decisions are reached.

HMS Cambridge

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the circumstances which led to the erection of a wire fence around HMS Cambridge at Wembury, Plymouth.

Mr. Chope: Some three years ago MOD (Navy) asked PSA to erect fencing on the legal boundaries to HMS Cambridge to improve security. This proposal was later shelved at the instigation of MOD (Navy). The circumstances which led to the request for the fencing is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how high is the fence which has been erected around HMS Cambridge at Wembury, Plymouth; how many yards of barbed wire have been used for the fence; and what is the cost of the fence to the taxpayer.

Mr. Chope: Some 80 posts, 2·4 high, have been erected over a distance of 260 m at a cost of approximately £8,000. Work was halted before any fencing or barbed wire was erected.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why a wire fence was erected around HMS Cambridge at Wembury, Plymouth, before a decision was made on planning consent by the South Hams district council.

Mr. Chope: At the time the original request was received, copies of plans for consultation with the local planning authority were proposed but were not submitted because the project was shelved. Following the installation of sensitive equipment by MOD (Navy), PSA was recently asked to reactivate the project. Work was put in hand in the mistaken belief that approvals had been obtained when the proposal was mooted earlier. I can only express regret for this omission, which arose out of the "stop-go" history of the proposal and changes in personnel in the interim.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to halt all further erection of fencing at HMS Cambridge at Wembury, Plymouth, until the final determination of the planning consent by the South Hams district council.

Mr. Chope: As soon as it was discovered that the planning authority had not in fact been given an opportunity to comment, work was halted. The section of incomplete fence has now been made the subject of a formal planning submission in accordance with established procedures.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to divert a well-established footpath along the heritage coastline resulting from the newly erected fence around HMS Cambridge at Wembury, Plymouth; what procedures have been followed; and if he will ensure that the footpath will not be truncated.

Mr. Chope: Steps to divert footpaths at MOD establishments are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultation he had with *(a)* the local parish council, *(b)* the district council, *(c)* the county council and *(d)* the National Trust before the erection of a wire fence at HMS Cambridge at Wembury, Plymouth.

Mr. Chope: No formal consultation took place before the posts were erected but MOD (Navy) gave a detailed presentation on its proposals to members of the local parish council in December 1986.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why Mr. O. W. Richards of the Property Services Agency in Plymouth stated to Wembury parish council in a letter of 8 May that he would not attend a public meeting on 20 May at Wembury to discuss the question of fencing around HMS Cambridge until a parliamentary question had been tabled and answered; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Mr. O. W. Richards, an assistant estate surveyor in PSA's Plymouth office, knew that inquiries had been made of a Minister in connection with the proposed fence around HMS Cambridge and mistakenly believed that these related to a parliamentary question. In accordance with normal convention, he was obliged to decline to comment publicly on the matter until the Minister's reply was made known.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultations the authorities from HMS Cambridge had with his Department prior to the erection of a wire fence around the base.

Mr. Chope: As indicated in my earlier response, a fence has not been erected around HMS Cambridge but work was started on a section of security fencing. During the period April 1985 to April 1986, five meetings were held between PSA and the authorities from HMS Cambridge at which the subject of this fencing was discussed.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, with reference to the erection of a wire fence around HMS Cambridge at Wembury, Plymouth, what consultation HMS Cambridge had with his Department about the diversion of the public footpath; and what reference was made to the fact that the area is one of outstanding natural beauty, of great landscape value and on the heritage coastline.

Mr. Chope: As indicated in my earlier response, any proposals for diversion of footpaths at MOD establishments are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. If such proposals were mooted they would be dealt with under either the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 or the Land Powers (Defence) Act 1958 which contain full provision for public representation and, if necessary, a local inquiry.

Low Paid (Rates)

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what decisions he has reached on the minimum percentage contribution to be made by those on low incomes to *(a)* rates and *(b)* the proposed poll tax.

Mr. Chope: My noble Friend Lord Glenarthur has made it clear, in another place, that we remain committed to the principle of everyone making a minimum contribution to the cost of local services and that we intend to take into account the impact of this on the most vulnerable groups when setting income support levels this autumn. We hope to make an announcement shortly.

Housing Starts (Bradford)

Mr. Lawler asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of *(a)* public and *(b)* private housing starts and completions in Bradford in each year from 1979 to 1986.

Mr. Tracey: The following numbers of dwelling starts and completions during 1986 in Bradford have been reported:

	Starts	*Completions*
Local authority	13	78
Housing associations	83	302
Public sector	96	380
Private sector	763	917
All	859	1,297

The reported figures of housebuilding in earlier years appear in the following issues of "Local Housing Statistics" which are available in the Library:

Year	*Issue number*
1979	59
1980-83	73
1984	77
1985	78

Repair Grants (Bolton)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what applications have been received from Bolton council since 1983 for funds for repair grants for *(a)* council housing and *(b)* private homes; how many homes have been repaired in each category as a result; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: My right hon. Friend is not aware of such applications. It is for individual local authorities to decide how to distribute the total resources made available to them in their housing investment programme allocations. I understand that Bolton MBC has reported to the Department payment of 437 repairs grants between 1983 and 1986, of which one was to a council tenant.

Wood Treatment

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, in the light of recent water pollution incidents involving the leakage of toxic chemicals for the pre-treatment of wood, he will take steps to strengthen the regulations covering the location, design and operation of premises such as timber treatment plants.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Department is considering the introduction of regulations covering the precautions to be taken in order to prevent harmful material from polluting water. Discussions are due to take place with water authorities on the scope of these regulations and consultations with interested parties will then follow.

The Department is also commissioning a special investigation of pollution problems arising from timber treatment plants.

Parking Fines

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment where the records are kept in respect of date and location of parking fines incurred by ministerial vehicles.

Mr. Chope: The record of parking fines incurred by Government car service vehicles is kept by the Government car service.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which Ministers were involved in the parking fines listed for 1986.

Mr. Chope: This information is not readily available. Indeed, it does not necessarily follow that the cars were in ministerial use when the fines were incurred. For example, the fines for parking offences incurred by the DOE were all attributable to DOE officials attending official engagements.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether individual Government Departments maintain a record of fines incurred by ministerial vehicles attached to that Department.

Mr. Chope: Records of parking fines incurred by GCS vehicles used by Government Departments are maintained by the GCS and notified to Departments where necessary.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the fine paid, the date and the location of the parking offences incurred by the ministerial vehicles from his Department in 1986.

Mr. Chope: The information is as follows:

		Fine £
5 February 1986	Moreton Street SW1	10
20 March 1986	Horseferry Road SW1	10
10 June 1986	St. James Street SW1	12
1 August 1986	Causton Street SW1	4
31 October 1986	Emeryhill Street SW1	12

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment by what means parking fines incurred by ministerial vehicles are *(a)* processed and *(b)* paid by his Department.

Mr. Chope: The parking ticket is passed to the GCS briefing office by the driver incurring the fine. The offence is recorded against the Government Department using the vehicle. Once it is established that the fine has been incurred as a direct result of having to undertake official duty, payment is made out of departmental funds.

Residuary Bodies (Land)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his reply of 12 May, he will detail the reasons advanced by each residuary body making successful application for consent for disposal of land or buildings for less than the best price offered.

Mr. Chope: Approval, of the disposal, of the land at Caryl street, Liverpool, and at Humbold street, Bradford, were given in order to complete negotiations in progress when the metropolitan county councils were abolished. Approval of the disposal of the Greater Manchester museum of science and industry was given to enable the freehold to be transferred to the Museum trust.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what justifications were advanced by the London Residuary Body for applications made to his Department for the acquisition of land as listed in his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West on 12 May 1987.

Mr. Chope: A summary of the London Residuary Body's reasons in each case follows:

Land application	*Reasons for acquisition*
Sub-underlease of part of first floor of 20 Albert Embankment SE1	To provide accommodation for staff of the London and South East Regional Planning Conference.
551b High Road, N17	To safeguard a right of access and to improve the marketability of an adjacent Residuary Body property.
Land at the rear of the Western Arms Public House, W10	To enable work to be completed on the construction of industrial units commenced by the former GLC.
14-20 Glass Street, EC2	To achieve an exchange of land which would enhance the value of a site already owned by the LRB.

County Hall, London

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will issue an instruction halting the current public inquiry into the proposed sale of County hall, London, until the outcome of the general election.

Mr. Chope: No. The public inquiry system is independent of the electoral process.

Eviction Notices (West Yorkshire)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the depository of the West Yorkshire archives service and the notice to quit its premises which it has received from the West Yorkshire residuary body.

Mr. Chope: The depository of the West Yorkshire archives service is located at the Registry of Deeds, Margaret street, Wakefield. The West Yorkshire residuary body has submitted proposals to the Secretary of State under section 67 of the Local Government Act 1985 to transfer this property to Wakefield metropolitan district council as lead authority for the West Yorkshire Archives and Archaeology Joint Committee.

Mr. Harrison: asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many organisations have been sent eviction notices from their properties which formerly belonged to the West Yorkshire metropolitan county council by the West Yorkshire residuary body; on what dates these eviction notices were served; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: None.

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many organisations have been given notice to quit by the West Yorkshire residuary body from properties which belonged to the former West Yorkshire metropolitan county council; and if he will identify those organisations and the specific dates of the notices.

Mr. Chope: I understand that four notices to quit have been issued under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 in respect of commercial premises in order to initiate procedures for rent reviews.

The following notices have also been issued in accordance with article 11 of the Local Government Reorganisation (Property etc) Order 1986 (SI 1986 No. 148) terminating user rights:

A notice issued on 24 February 1987 to Wakefield metropolitan district council and notices issued on 25 February 1987 to the West Yorkshire police authority, the West Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority and Bradford metropolitan district council in respect of their occupation of parts of County hall, Wakefield. These notices expire on 31 December 1987.

A similar notice issued on 17 December 1986 to Wakefield metropolitan district council in respect of the occupation of part of 8-14 St. Johns North, Wakefield, by the archaeology unit. This notice expired on 31 March 1987 and I understand that discussions are proceeding between the residuary body and the council about the vacation of the building.

Property Sales (West Yorkshire)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many properties which belonged to the former West Yorkshire metropolitan county council have been sold by the West Yorkshire residuary body to public undertakings to date; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many properties which belonged to the former West Yorkshire metropolitan county council have been sold by the West Yorkshire residuary body to private undertakings to date; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what was the value of the individual properties which belonged to the former West Yorkshire metropolitan county council which have been sold by the West Yorkshire residuary body to public undertakings to date; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what was the value of the individual properties which belonged to the former West Yorkshire metropolitan county council which have been sold by the West Yorkshire residuary body to private undertakings to date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The information available to the Department is that the West Yorkshire residuary body had sold 114 properties to the private and public sectors by the end of April 1987. Receipts were some £3·46 million.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Ridley: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Ridley: Excluding the royal parks and palaces, total spending on heating and lighting in 1986-87 in my Department's buildings was:

	£ million
Central DOE	1·48
PSA	2·12
	3·60

This represents a reduction of some 10 per cent. on the previous year, in part achieved with the help of energy efficiency measures costing some £45,000.

Local Authority Fees and Charges

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when his review on local authority fees and charges is likely to be published.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my right hon. Friend gave to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 4 March at column *642*.

Private Security Services

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much has been paid by his Department for services provided by private security companies in each of the past five years.

Mr. Ridley: The figures for services and for buildings where central DOE is the sole or major occupier are as follows:

	£
1982-83	110,000
1983-84	148,000
1984-85[1]	236,000
1985-86[1]	527,000
1986-87[1]	540,000

[1] The increases from 1984-85 onwards follow contracting out of previously in-house services.

Industrial Building Allowances

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if there are any proposals for industrial building allowances in areas where there are urban development corporations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: There are no such proposals. Several urban development areas already contain enterprise zones which provide various tax exemptions and allowances.

City of London (Rates)

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he makes of the likely level of the poll tax with no safety net for residents of the City of London; and how this compares with average domestic rate bills in the City of London.

Mr. Chope: Paragraphs H.24-27 of the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cmnd. 9714) made it clear that modified grant arrangements will be required for the City of London and the Isles of Scilly. No estimate of community charges for the City of London can be made until those arrangements are settled.

Smith Houses (Leicester)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the latest position regarding those Smith house private owners in Leicester awaiting full approval from Leicester city council for repair systems.

Mr. John Patten: Under the housing defects legislation responsibility for administering the scheme of assistance lies with the local authority concerned. I hope Leicester city council and the Smith home owners will be able to reach a good understanding on both the form and timing of that assistance.

Local Authority Charges

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all those bodies which submitted evidence to his review on local authority charges.

Mr. Chope: Comments were submitted by local authority associations, individual local authorities, professional bodies and organisations representing commerce, industry and other interests. I shall place a list of these bodies in the Library shortly.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the evidence given to his review on local authority charges.

Mr. Chope: I do not have the permission of those who submitted comments to publish their views.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all services included in the terms of reference of this review into local authority charges.

Mr. Chope: No service was excluded from the scope of the review.

Homes Insulation Programme

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the criteria he adopts for ensuring that the Government's home insulation programme is carried out by approved contractors.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Community Charge

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will indicate how matters referred to as concurrent functions between district and parish councils will be treated under the community charge.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Empty Properties

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the answer of 14 May concerning vacant flats and houses, if he will give the relevant figures for Greater London *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by individual boroughs.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the average house price, at the mortgage completion stage, in *(a)* London Docklands Development Corporation and *(b)* the London borough of Newham.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *86*]: The average price at the mortgage completion stage of houses on London Docklands Development Corporation owned sites between 1 April 1986 and 31 December 1986 was £64,600. Information on average house prices in the London borough of Newham is not available.

House Building

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many houses are currently under construction; and how this number compares with the position in May 1979.

Mr. Tracey [*pursuant to his reply*, 14 May 1987]: The latest estimates are that there were 223,300 private and 43,200 public sector dwellings under construction in England at the end of March this year; at the end of March 1979, there were, respectively, 176,800 and 161,000.

In the private sector, the rise of 46,500 has taken the number under construction to the highest level since 1973, and reflects people's ambitions to become owner-occupiers. There are now 2·3 million more owner-occupied dwellings in England than there were eight years ago.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Departmental Achievements

Mr. Pawsey asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the principal achievements of his Department since 1983.

Mr. Jopling: Further to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) on 3 April 1985, my Department has been responsible for, or played its part in, the following achievements.

Significant reforms of the common agricultural policy have been agreed and implemented, which will help to make it more responsive to market forces, contain surplus production and limit excessive expenditure. The measures agreed include reductions in support price levels in the three years 1984 to 1986 with estimated savings of 780 mecu (£565 million) over two years resulting from the 1986 price fixing.

This has contributed to a low rate of increase in food prices. Since May 1983, the annual rate of increase in the food component of the retail prices index (RPI) has been 4·1 per cent; the current annual rate is 3·3 per cent.

Notable among the reforms made so far to the CAP were those achieved in the beef and dairy sectors in December 1986, under the United Kingdom presidency of the Council of Agriculture Ministers. This included further measures to restrict dairy production, but with generous compensation to minimise disruption to the industry, and a general tightening of the quota system. The United Kingdom secured retention of the formula B arrangements which provide much needed flexibility in the quota system. The package also included measures restricting access to intervention, restoring it to its original safety-net role whilst at the same time ensuring the stability of the market, as well as agreement for an action programme to clear existing stocks.

The Council also agreed a substantial reform of the beef regime. Intervention purchasing of beef was made less readily available and buying-in prices were reduced to a level closer to and directly influenced by Community market prices. The beef variable premium scheme was extended, unchanged, for the duration of the reform.

The agreements on milk and beef, including the programme for disposal of butter stocks, will reduce Community expenditure by some 1,750 mecu (£1,268 million) in the period 1987 to 1989.

Following the introduction of milk quotas in 1984 we were able to introduce arrangements to restore the quota received by producers with less than 200,000 litres of quota to their pre-quota level. We also made direct compensation payments in 1984-85 and 1985-86 to alleviate the effect of the milk co-responsibility levy on small scale producers.

The Agriculture Council in March 1987 agreed a package of socio-structural measures designed to reduce production of surplus commodities and help farmers to adapt to changes in agricultural policy without damaging the countryside. The package provides for schemes to reduce surplus production by encouraging conversion to alternative crops and more extensive production of certain surplus products, including cereals, which will be achieved partly by setting aside land.

The package also provides for Community funding of environmentally sensitive areas, in which farmers may be offered incentives to farm in traditional ways to maintain valuable landscapes and wildlife habitats. This is a concept pioneered by the United Kingdom, and [illegible] marks the beginning of a more integrated approach to the countryside in the Community at large.

Within the United Kingdom the first round of ESAs have been designated. The new scheme — which in England covers the Broads, the Pennine dales, the Somerset levels and moors, the South downs and West Penwith — opened to applications in these areas on 1 March 1987, and the response from farmers has been encouraging.

The agriculture improvement scheme which we introduced in 1 October 1985 continues our policy of encouraging on-farm investment. Under this scheme a wide range of capital grants is available including, for the first time, grants for diversification into tourism and crafts (in the less favoued areas) and grant premia for young farmers. The highest rates of grant are available for environmentally beneficial improvements, special encouragement is also given to orchard replanting and glasshouse replacement. Higher rates of grant are offered on nearly 1·8 million hectares in the less favoured areas in England of which nearly 400,000 were brought in when the LFAs were extended in 1984.

In February this year I announced a package of new measures, which will cost £25 million a year when fully operational, to help the industry to adjust to changing circumstances. These included a new farm woodland scheme, some further expansion of traditional forestry particularly on better quality land, a substantial extension of our programme for environmentally sensitive areas, new grants for farm diversification and more emphasis on novel crops and livestock in the research and development programme.

The Government followed this up on 10 March by publishing a package of documents entitled "Farming and Rural Enterprise". These explained the Government's policies for agriculture, including the new initiatives, and for encouraging enterprise and development in rural areas.

The adoption of section 17 of the Agriculture Act 1986 placed a duty on Agriculture Ministers to take account of wider environmental and socio-economic objectives in determining agricultural policy, and so gave expression to my Department's commitment to the integration of environmental and agricultural policies.

My Department was responsible for initiating the farm and countryside initiative, which was launched in February 1986 in conjunction with the Departments of the Environment and Employment and with statutory agencies involved in the countryside. To date over 100 projects have been approved involving considerably in excess of 2,000 community programme places.

We took special action to help livestock producers most seriously affected by the bad summer weather in 1985 and paid out a total of £16·9 million in exceptional weather aid to about 60,000 farmers.

In the animal welfare field we have set up the independent Farm Animal Welfare Council, which has given us valuable advice on all aspects of the subject. We have introduced legislation to protect welfare at slaughter and to prevent unnecessary mutilations on the farm. We have also produced new welfare codes for cattle, pigs, poultry and rabbits. We have announced a major rationalisation of the legislation on welfare in transit and a ban on the veal crate system of calf rearing. Internationally we have supported the adoption of European directives on transport and battery cages.

We have overhauled the legislation covering cattle breeding. We will be abolishing controls over the livestock quality of dairy and beef bulls as they have now served their purpose.

We are in the process of putting in place new controls over medicated animal feedingstuffs in full consultation with the industry. This will implement both EC legislation and powers taken in the Animal Health and Welfare Act 1984.

My Department's policy in relation to the control of badger-borne bovine tuberculosis was reviewed by a committee under the chairmanship of Professor Dunnet. Its recommendations are being implemented. The scale of badger control operations has thus been reduced with a reduction in the number of badgers being slaughtered.

In collaboration with the other public sector sponsors of research and development we have established the Priorities Board for Research and Development in Agriculture and Food to advise on priorities between sectors in the allocation of resources. We have also encouraged the industry to play a larger role in funding work from which it derives a benefit.

In 1983 we established Food From Britain to improve the marketing of our food and drink. We provided £14 million pump priming money over its first five years.

In July 1986, we set up a Horticultural Development Council to commission R & D in horticulture on the industry's behalf. This followed a poll in which growers voted two to one in favour of such a council.

In July 1986 we reached agreement with the Milk Marketing Board and the Dairy Trade Federation on arrangements designed to strengthen competition in the dairy industry, to ensure fair competition among all buyers of milk, to clarify the separation of Dairy Crest Foods from the Milk Marketing Board and to reinforce the Government's supervisory role in ensuring compliance with Community and domestic legislation.

We have reorganised the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS) to improve its efficiency and competitiveness and to help provide a more integrated service to the agricultural industry. In particular the new arrangements will allow farmers and other major interest groups to obtain advice across a range of technical disciplines by contacting a single service within ADAS rater than more than one service as might have been the case previously. Powers have also been taken in the

Agriculture Act 1986 to extend the range of matters on which ADAS can provide advisory services and to allow charges to be made for such services, thus enabling farmers and other customers for ADAS services to influence directly the range and type of services provided.

The development of efficient and competitive food and drinks industries has been complemented by a comprehensive range of legislation controlling the safety, quality and labelling of food. Principal achievements in this field include the Food Labelling Regulations 1984 which implement a European Community directive to provide greater information on food labels so that consumers can make more informed choices when selecting foods. We have also revised and updated regulations relating to bread and flour and meat products and spreadable fish products.

In addition we have responded to the report of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA) on diet and cardiovascular disease by circulating for public comment detailed proposals for the fat content labelling of foods. We have also circulated for comment separate draft guidelines for voluntary nutrition labelling.

We have increased the resource devoted to scientific surveillance of the food chain. Three new working parties have been established on organic and environmental contaminants, nutrients and radioactivity in food.

We set in hand swift and comprehensive testing of food supplies following the Chernobyl accident in 1986 in order to ensure the safety of all food consumed by the British public. Duplicate diet surveys have provided direct confirmation of this even in those areas where deposition was greatest.

The Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 has done useful service in controlling the movement and slaughter of sheep from upland areas contaminated by radioactivity from the Chernobyl disaster. Part II has introduced improved controls over the disposal of waste at sea. Under part III the sale, supply and use of pesticides were brought under statutory control by the Control of Pesticides Regulations on 6 October 1986, and pesticide advertising from 1 January 1987. These controls will extend to antifouling paints from 1 July 1987.

Together with the Department of the Environment, my Department has further improved controls over the amount of radioactive waste which may be disharged to sea by British Nucelar Fuels' Sellafield plant, through the introduction of a revised discharge authorisation which came into effect on 1 July 1986.

Further advances have been made in strengthening and consolidating the common fisheries policy (CFP). Under the United Kingdom presidency of the Fisheries Council from July to December 1986 we secured the full-scale revision of the regulation on technical conservation measures. Agreement was reached on a staged increase in the minimum mesh size for the North sea to 90 mm by 1989, on retention of the mesh size derogation for vessels below 300 bhp fishing for sole, on improvements in the rules governing beam trawling within the 12-mile inshore zone including the reintroduction of an 8 m limit aggregate beam length and on the maintenance of the key restrictions on industrial fisheries.

Substantial improvements were also made under the recent United Kingdom presidency to the Community's control and enforcement arrangements, including increased powers for Community inspectors, tighter control of over-fishing and, for the first time, we have established the principle that a member state which overfishes its national quota to the extent that other member states are prevented from fully taking theirs, will now be required to compensate the disadvantaged member states, thus providing a real incentive not to over-fish.

A new regulation on structural policy for the Community fleet, to last for 10 years, was agreed at the Fisheries Council on 3-4 December and provides measures for vessel construction and modernisation, development of aquaculture, adjustment of capacity, modernisation of port facilities and fish promotion. The Community financial provision until 1991 is 800 mecu (£500 million).

In each of the last three years we have managed to secure agreement on the TACs and quotas for the year ahead before the actual start of the fishing year and in 1986, under the United Kingdom presidency we also negotiated a long-term agreement with Norway on the share out of North sea herring, an issue which has caused major problems in the past.

The Sea Fish Industry Authority's five-year sea fish industry development programme (1984-89) is promoting the consumption and marketing of fish. The Government have already paid £8 million towards the first three years of this programme and a further £4 million has now been allocated for the final two years.

We have brought in important new measures to attack trade in illegally caught salmon in the Salmon Act 1986.

We have strengthened the machinery for preventing and controlling fish and shellfish diseases through the Diseases of Fish Act 1983 and subsequent orders.

Since the introduction of the Government's policy on deregulation, my Department has sought to reduce unnecessary burdens on the industries for which I am responsible whenever possible. Close links are maintained with the representatives of those industries.

All of these policies have been carried out while achieving a further reduction of Ministry staff.

Bovine Somatoropin Milk Trials

Mr. Marland asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will inform the Milk Marketing Board of the names of the farmers who are participating in the bovine somatoropin milk production trials.

Mr. Jopling: I am precluded from doing so under section 118 of the Medicines Act 1968.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mrs. Roe asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he is now able to announce the identity of the environmenttally sensitive areas which will be designated in England in 1988.

Mr. Jopling: Following the very promising response which farmers have made in the first set of areas, I have decided to designate all of the remaining areas on the shortlist which the Countryside Commission and Nature Conservancy Council submitted to me last year. This means that we shall be introducing new environmentally sensitive areas in Breckland, the North peak, the Suffork river valleys, the Test valley, the Shropshire borders (Clun) and the western part of the South downs. Interested organisations in these areas will be consulted before the designating orders are laid towards the end of this year.

Dr. David Clark asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give the extent, in hectares, of each environmentally sensitive area in England and Wales as designated on 1 March; and if he will indicate how many farmers he estimates will be eligible to receive payments for entering into management agreements in each area.

Mr. Jopling: We estimate that the total size of each environmentally sensitive area is a follows. However, these figures include urban and other land which is not in agricultural use or is otherwise ineligible. It is not yet possible to give reliable figures for agricultural areas or for the total number of farmers in each ESA. I hope that such figures will be available when the areas have been fully surveyed later this year.

	Hectares
The Broads (including Halvergate)	29,870
Pennine Dales	15,900
Somerset Levels	26,970
South Downs	26,600
West Penwith	7,200
Cambrian Mountains	75,000

Dr. David Clark asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers have entered into management agreements with him in each of the environmentally sensitive areas in England and Wales.

Mr. Jopling: The latest available figures for the number of applications that we have received in each area are as follows:

	Number
The Broads	400
The Pennine Dales	220
Somerset Levels	560
South Downs	55
West Penwith	142
Cambrian Mountains	90

Dr. David Clark asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farm development plans, drawn up under the agriculture and horticulture development scheme and the agriculture improvement scheme, are currently in operation in each environmentally sensitive area in England and Wales; and what steps his Department proposes to take to ensure that planned developments which may conflict with the objectives of each environmentally sensitive area will not be allowed to go ahead.

Mr. Jopling: We have no comprehensive record of the number of development and improvement plans currently in force in environmentally sensitive areas. Where approval to such plans was given before the designation of the area the Ministry will honour its commitment to the farmer. Since designation all applications for new plans and variations to existing plans have been referred to the relevant project officer. Such applications are accepted only if they do not contain work which would undermine the environmentally sensitive area.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Jopling: This information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Jopling: In 1986-87 my Department spent £3·215 million on fuel and utilities supplied to those buildings (or parts of buildings) which it occupies on the civil estate. Measures achieving energy efficiency often form part of more general maintenance or repair and it is not possible to identify this element separately.

Farm Diversification

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make available further details of the scheme for farm diversification which he announced to the House on 9 February.

Mr. Jopling: Following from that announcement, and after discussions with interested organisations, I have arranged for a consultation document to be issued today seeking comments on the proposed scope, coverage and eligibility conditions of the new on-farm diversification grants. The scheme will be in two parts with grants towards both capital investment and the costs of product research and marketing. It is suggested that the capital grants should be offered both inside and outside the less favoured areas at a rate of 25 per cent. on investment up to around £25,000 within a farm improvement plan. Eligible investments would include on-farm tourist accommodation and craft workshops, visitor attractions and recreation and amenity facilities, small-scale sporting facilities, on-farm value added processing of food and agricultural products, farm shops and pick-your-own, pony trekking and livery. Assistance would be available towards building conversions, some new building, access and parking facilities and some machinery and equipment. It is also suggested that grants of 50 per cent. should be offered towards the cost of feasibility and marketing studies and 30 per cent. towards the cost of key marketing personnel over the first three years of a project. Grants would be available to groups as well as individuals.

The consultation document is being sent to a wide range of interested parties. Copies are available in the Library of the House.

Sheep Farmers (Chernobyl Restrictions)

Sir Hector Monro asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress has been made in considering the case for further compensation for sheep farmers affected by the Chernobyl restrictions.

Mr. Jopling: As I announced on 2 May, in the light of recent detailed information presented by the industry Agriculture Ministers have concluded that a further element of compensation is justified in relation to the additional costs of handling sheep before they can be released from the restricted areas. Accordingly, it has been agreed that a payment of £1·30 per sheep will be made in respect of sheep moved under consent from restricted areas. This will apply to movements taking place on and after 29 September 1986.

A case has also been put to us that, while most producers have been adequately compensated, for a small number of farmers the existing arrangements are considered not to have provided fair compensation. This matter has been considered with great care in discussion with representatives of the farmers; but we have been unable to find a sound basis for avoiding the rough justice which we always agreed would inevitably be a feature of the compensation arrangements. However, I have told the farmers' representatives that if they were able to find workable criteria which properly identified a small number of farmers whose cases might justify further consideration I would be ready to study the matter again.

Salmonella

Mr. John Townend asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his assessment of the effectiveness of the Diseases of Animals (Protein Processing) Order 1981 and the Importation of Processed Animal Protein Order 1981 in reducing the incidence of salmonella in processed animal protein.

Mr. Donald Thompson [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *565*]: The regular monitoring of protein processing plants under the Diseases of Animals (Protein Processing) Order 1981 has shown that at least 50 per cent. consistently produce a salmonella-free product. On premises where positive samples have been found, prompt remedial action has resulted in the production of salmonella-free products. Licensed imported animal protein products must comply with similar standards.

Farming (Young Entrants)

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to support young entrants to farming.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *564*]: Special help with capital expenditure incurred by new entrant young farmers was made available for the first time in October 1985 when the Government introduced the agriculture improvement scheme. Under that scheme a premium of 25 per cent. on the normal grant rates for grant investments is offered to suitably qualified young farmers. Young farmers have also benefited from the comprehensive changes to agricultural holdings legislation made in 1984, in particular the ending of statutory succession for new tenancies.

The Government have also made improvements in the tax system designed to help farmers pass on their properties to their successors, and to encourage the letting of land. Abolition of investment income surcharge and improvements in inheritence tax and capital gains tax reliefs have made it easier for retiring farmers to pass the reins on to others.

Food Safety

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures the Government have taken since 1979 to ensure the safety of food.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *564*]: The Government attach great importance on the need to ensure the safety of food and have taken appropriate action whenever a need to do so has been identified.

As part of its ongoing programme of food surveillance, my Department has, through the steering group on food surveillance, continued to monitor the incidence of food contamination and, where necessary, remedial action has been taken. Legislation has been introduced to limit the amount of vinyl chloride monomer contained in food contact plastics that may migrate into food. Also more stringnt statutory limits have been set for levels of lead in canned food. Other action has included a voluntary agreement with the trade intended to limit the amount of aflatoxin occuring in nuts and nut products. A statutory limit is currently being considered. We have examined instances when the constituents of food packaging materials may migrate into food, such as with cling film, and we have issued the necessary advice and guidance to consumers and others. In 1985 following contamination of imported wine with the chemical diethylene glycol we took action to alert the trade and enforcement authorities and obtained their co-operation in withdrawing stocks of suspect wines. Prompt action prevented the import of wine containing high levels of methanol.

The Government have made regulations to strengthen public health controls over the production and importation of meat and introduced arrangements for monitoring meat for the presence of veterinary residue.

In 1982 the Government gave their strong support to a private Member's Bill, which became the Food and Drugs (Amendment) Act 1982, which stiffened the penalties available to the courts to deal with traders in unfit food, particularly meat, and allowed more time for enforcement authorities to prepare sufficient cases.

The Government have continued to attach importance to the independent advice provided by the Food Advisory Committee (before 1983 it was the Food Additives and Contaminants Committee) and in November of last year strengthened this committee by the appointment of two additional members. The use of food additives has been kept under constant review during this period and several reports have been published. Where necessary, amendments to food additives regulations have been made including those controlling sweeteners, emulsifiers and stabilisers, and miscellaneous additives and, most recently, proposals to amend the Colours in Food Regulations have been made. It continues to be our policy that additives are not permitted for use by regulations unless Ministers are satisfied that on the basis of the committee's advice they are both safe and needed.

Immediately following the accident at Chernobyl, the Government instituted a comprehensive testing programme for home-produced foodstuffs and agricultural materials. In June 1986, movement and slaughter restrictions were imposed under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 on sheep in certain areas of Cumbria in order to ensure that animals containing unacceptably high levels of radioactivity did not enter the food chain. Parallel measures were taken to deal with sheep in certain areas of Wales and Scotland.

The Government have issued a number of publications designed to encourage higher standards of food safety. These include a food hygiene code of practice for United Kingdom manufacturers of canned low acid foods, together with an advisory memorandum for overseas canning companies intending to export to the United Kingdom and a memorandum on the testing of novel foods. In addition, Goverment Departments have actively participated in the preparation of various food safety codes of practice produced by the food industry.

So far as food served in hospitals is concerned, health authorities are now legally required to ensure that the provisions of the Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1970 are met. Ministers have agreed that the provisions in the food hygiene regulations relating to temperature controls should be reviewed.

Through liaison with the communicable disease surveillance centre and developments in the identification of food poisoning organisms, hazardous foods have been more easily identified. DHSS has evolved a system for the co-ordination of control action to ensure the speedy removal from sale of foods which are a risk to health.

Horticulture

Mrs. Roe asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will state the achievements of the Government with regard to the horticulture industry.

Mr. Jopling: The Government have set the climate in which the industry can prosper through capital grant to growers, including enhanced rates for heated glasshouses and orchard replanting; by the introduction of a new programme for EC grants for improved horticultural marketing and processing; by securing satisfactory safeguards for horticulture in various new trading arrangements; through its research and development programme, including the setting up of a horticultural development council for industry funded research; and by persuading the EC Commission to take action to prevent unfair competition from imports of semi-processed soft fruits and from the preferential gas prices to Dutch growers.

SOCIAL SERVICES

AIDS

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why heterosexuals are referred to as straight in his Department's advertising about AIDS; what evidence he has that this expression will be understood by heterosexual people; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The word "straight" is a common form of expression in the context of the comparison between "gay" and "straight" when referring to homosexual and heterosexual relationships. We have tried to avoid the use of medical jargon in our advertising.

The advertising campaign is being closely monitored. There is no indication that the term "straight" is misunderstood by the heterosexual target audience.

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what additional resources he has allocated to voluntary organisations to enable them to educate the public about AIDS.

Mr. Newton: The funding provided to voluntary organisations concerned with public education in the AIDS field has increased from £125,000 in 1985-86 to £469,000 in 1986-87. This funding has mostly been given to support central administrative costs and telephone advice services. We are making available increased resources for the current financial year and we are now considering how these can best be allocated. My right hon. Friend announced on 5 May that the Government will be providing £500,000 over the next year to support the new National AIDS Trust which will co-ordinate voluntary effort on AIDS.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he is satisfied that the AIDS leaflet distributed to households covers all known means of transmission of the AIDS virus; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We are satisfied that, on the best advice available, the AIDS leaflet distributed to households covers all means of transmission of the AIDS virus relevant to the general public. It does not seek to cover more specialised risks of transmission which are of relevance only to particular occupations.

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidance he has issued concerning precautions against AIDS in the catering industry.

Mr. Newton: None. However, the Department was consulted by the Food and Drink Association about the guidance that it has issued.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what representations he has received regarding proposals by the Lister Arthur Medical Centre to acquire premises in Leicester for use as an hotel for AIDS victims; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is his policy on the provision by private medical companies of hotel accommodation specifically allocated for the use of AIDS sufferers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We received no representations about the proposals by the Lister Arthur medical centre. It is for private companies to decide what accommodation they offer and for what purposes, but registration and inspection would be required if such accommodation constituted a residential care or nursing home.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information his Department has received in the context of the anti-AIDS campaign about the relative safety of the gun method and the use of disposable needles for injections; what guidance he has issued on this matter; and what representations he has received about the use of the gun method.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply,* 23 February 1987, c. *118*]: On the recommendation of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which advises the Department on all aspects of immunisation, the Chief Medical Officer wrote to all doctors on 12 September 1986 discouraging the use of jet injectors for immunisation. These instruments had been used mainly to administer influenza vaccinations. The advice did not apply to self-injection of insulin or low-dose heparin, nor to the multiple puncture apparatus (or Heaf gun) used for tuberculin testing. One hon. Member has written to my right hon. Friend about the Heaf gun.

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in future publicity about AIDS, he will emphasise that condoms are available free at family planning clinics.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 March 1987, *c.477*]: Condoms are available without charge through family planning clinics for contraceptive purposes. We have noted the hon. Member's suggestion.

Residential Homes

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, how many residential homes owned by local authorities are below the standards set out in the code of practice for registered private and voluntary homes.

Mr. Newton: The setting of standards for local authority residential homes is a matter for the authority concerned and information about them is not collected centrally as a matter of routine. However, there is no reason to suppose that standards of care in general are significantly below those envisaged in "Home Life".

Condoms

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 15 December, *Official Report*, column *412*, what information he has about the level of charges made by clinics for condoms supplied without prescription *(a)* in London and *(b)* nationally; what is his estimate of the number of such clinics (i) in London and (ii) nationally which supply condoms free of charge; and what percentage of the total this represents.

Mr. Newton: We do not hold information centrally on the charges made by individual clinics. However, our guidance to health authorities advises that the charge for non-medical methods of contraception supplied without prescription should reflect the purchase price paid by the health authority plus 10 per cent. for handling expenses, and VAT. Bulk purchasing arrangements are made by individual health authorities. One company's price list for health authority orders ranges from £8·89 per gross to £16·61 per gross depending on type of condom and size of order.

We are not aware that any health authorities have departed from our guidance that all forms of contraceptive appliances should be provided free of charge if prescribed.

Mental Health Research Liaison Group

Mr. Raynsford asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many new projects will be started in the financial year 1987-88 through the Mental Health Research Liaison Group; what will be the budget for such projects; and how this compares with figures for the last three financial years.

Mrs. Currie: The Department's expenditure on directly commissioned research in the mental health field during the last three years was:

	£
1984-85	1,789,000
1985-86	1,693,000
1986-87	1,711,000

It is not yet possible to give expected expenditure in 1987-88.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the average waiting time for knee and hip joint replacement operations; and what are the five authorities which have the longest waiting times.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member all the information he seeks in precisely the form requested. The estimated median interval between the date a patient was placed on the waiting list and the date of admission to NHS hospitals in England for knee joint replacement in 1985, the latest year for which information is available centrally, was 21 weeks. The central data sample is too small for reliable estimates to be made at regional level. For hip operations the requested information is given in the table.

Five longest estimated median waiting times of waiting list cases for total hip replacement and other arthroplasty of hip, NHS Regional Health Authorities in England 1985

Regional Health Authority	*Estimated median waiting time (in weeks)*
Wessex	28
South West Thames	26
Trent	25
West Midlands	24
South East Thames	23
England	21

West Lancashire

Mr. Hind asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the total budgets for the West Lancashire health authority for 1978-79, 1983-84 and 1986-87.

Mr. Newton: The determination of budgets for individual district health authorities is a matter for regional health authorities. My hon. Friend may wish to raise his query with the chairman of the North-Western regional health authority.

Mortality

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will tabulate mortality rates in Britain by (i) district health authority, (ii) gender and (iii) marital status.

Mrs. Currie: The full information requested is not available as population estimates by marital status are not produced for local health areas. However, the tables give the mortality rates for all causes and all ages *(a)* by sex for each local health area in Great Britain, and *(b)* by marital status and sex for Great Britain.

Table A: Crude mortality (all causes, all ages) rates per thousand population by sex for local health areas in England, Wales and Scotland (Great Britain) 1985

England and Wales—District Health Authorities (DHAs)

	M	*F*	*P*
Northern Regional Health Authority			
Hartlepool DHA	12·6	12·6	12·6
North Tees DHA	10·2	9·4	9·7
South Tees DHA	11·9	10·8	11·3
East Cumbria DHA	14·2	12·6	13·4
South Cumbria DHA	13·2	12·8	13·0
West Cumbria DHA	12·5	12·2	12·3
Darlington DHA	13·1	12·9	13·0
Durham DHA	12·7	11·6	12·2
North West Durham DHA	14·6	13·6	14·1

	M	*F*	*P*
South West Durham DHA	13·8	12·8	13·3
Northumberland DHA	13·5	12·9	13·2
Gateshead DHA	13·5	12·1	12·8
Newcastle DHA	13·6	14·0	13·8
North Tyneside DHA	14·2	13·5	13·9
South Tyneside DHA	14·7	13·0	13·9
Sunderland DHA	12·2	11·7	11·9
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority			
Hull DHA	12·2	11·3	11·7
East Yorkshre DHA	13·4	12·3	12·9
Grimsby DHA	12·1	11·2	11·6
Scunthorpe DHA	12·4	10·0	11·2
Northallerton DHA	10·5	10·0	10·3
York DHA	11·7	11·3	11·5
Scarborough DHA	16·4	14·6	15·4
Harrogate DHA	12·6	13·2	12·9
Bradford DHA	12·2	12·3	12·2
Airedale DHA	13·5	12·8	13·1
Calderdale DHA	13·2	13·6	13·4
Huddersfield DHA	12·4	12·7	12·8
Dewsbury DHA	11·9	12·4	12·2
Leeds Western DHA	12·7	12·2	12·4
Leeds Eastern DHA	12·4	11·5	11·9
Wakefield DHA	11·3	11·3	11·3
Pontefract DHA	13·3	11·2	12·2
Trent Regional Health Authority			
North Derbyshire DHA	12·9	12·1	12·5
Southern Derbyshire DHA	12·9	11·5	12·2
Leicestershire DHA	10·3	10·2	10·3
North Lincolnshire DHA	12·7	11·9	12·3
South Lincolnshire DHA	13·2	11·2	12·2
Bassetlaw DHA	11·5	10·9	11·2
Central Nottinghamshire DHA	11·7	10·2	10·9
Nottingham DHA	11·7	10·9	11·3
Barnsley DHA	12·5	12·2	12·4
Doncaster DHA	12·4	10·8	11·6
Rotherham DHA	11·3	10·7	11·0
Sheffield DHA	13·3	12·8	13·1
East Anglian Regional Health Authority			
Cambridge DHA	9·9	10·1	10·0
Peterborough DHA	10·8	9·9	10·3
West Suffolk DHA	10·7	10·0	10·4
East Suffolk DHA	11·5	11·7	11·6
Norwich DHA	13·1	12·3	12·7
Great Yarmouth and Waveney DHA	13·2	12·7	12·9
West Norfolk and Wisbech DHA	13·0	11·6	12·3
Huntingdon DHA	8·6	7·9	8·2
North West Thames Regional Health Authority			
North Bedfordshire DHA	9·4	9·7	9·6
South Bedfordshire DHA	8·9	8·4	8·7
North Hertfordshire DHA	10·1	9·2	9·7
East Hertfordshire DHA	9·0	8·1	8·5
North West Hertfordshire DHA	10·1	9·7	9·9
South West Hertfordshire DHA	10·5	11·6	11·1
Barnet DHA	11·0	12·0	11·5
Harrow DHA	10·3	10·1	10·2
Hillingdon DHA	10·6	10·2	10·4
Hounslow and Spelthorne DHA	10·7	10·3	10·5
Ealing DHA	10·7	10·4	10·5
Brent DHA	10·0	9·0	9·5
Paddington and North Kensington DHA	12·0	9·9	10·9
Riverside DHA from 1 April 1985	11·6	10·8	11·2
North East Thames Regional Health Authority			
Basildon and Thurrock DHA	9·6	8·8	9·2
Mid Essex DHA	9·8	8·8	9·3
North East Essex DHA	13·0	13·5	13·3
West Essex DHA	10·4	9·5	9·9
Southend DHA	12·2	12·7	12·5
Barking, Havering and Brentwood DHA	11·6	11·1	11·4
Hampstead DHA	11·4	11·2	11·3
Bloomsbury DHA	13·2	11·0	12·1
Islington DHA	12·1	10·7	11·4
City and Hackney DHA	10·8	11·1	11·0
Newham DHA	12·2	10·2	11·2
Tower Hamlets DHA	13·8	12·5	13·1
Enfield DHA	11·1	11·5	11·3
Haringey DHA	10·8	11·6	11·2
Redbridge DHA	11·3	10·6	10·9
Waltham Forest DHA	12·8	11·4	12·1
South East Thames Regional Health Authority			
Brighton DHA	15·7	16·6	16·2
Eastbourne DHA	16·9	17·6	17·3
Hastings DHA	18·4	19·1	18·8
South East Kent DHA	13·4	13·4	13·4
Canterbury and Thanet DHA	15·0	15·6	15·3
Dartford and Gravesham DHA	10·7	10·8	10·7
Maidstone DHA	10·6	9·1	9·9
Medway DHA	10·3	9·1	9·7
Tunbridge Wells DHA	11·5	13·0	12·3
Bexley DHA	10·3	9·3	9·8
Greenwich DHA	12·2	11·2	11·7
Bromley DHA	10·5	10·9	10·7
West Lambeth DHA	11·7	11·1	11·4
Camberwell DHA	12·5	11·1	11·8
Lewisham and North Southwark DHA	12·5	11·8	12·1
South West Thames Regional Health Authority			
North West Surrey DHA	10·1	11·5	10·8
West Surrey and North East Hampshire DHA	7·3	8·2	7·7
South West Surrey DHA	10·8	11·2	11·0
Mid Surrey DHA	13·0	13·9	13·4
East Surrey DHA	11·8	11·5	11·7
Chichester DHA	15·9	16·4	16·2
Mid Downs DHA	10·1	10·5	10·3
Worthing DHA	18·0	19·1	18·6
Croydon DHA	10·5	11·5	11·0
Kingston and Esher DHA	10·7	11·6	11·2
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton DHA	12·4	12·5	12·4
Wandsworth DHA	12·4	12·9	12·6
Merton and Sutton DHA	11·3	11·1	11·2
Wessex Regional Health Authority			
East Dorset DHA	14·4	15·0	14·7
West Dorset DHA	12·6	13·3	13·0
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire DHA	11·0	11·1	11·1
Southampton and South West Hampshire DHA	12·0	11·4	11·7
Winchester DHA	10·0	11·2	10·6
Basingstoke and North Hampshire	9·1	8·8	8·9
Salisbury DHA	12·5	12·5	12·5
Swindon DHA	10·5	9·1	9·8
Bath DHA	10·8	11·8	11·3
Isle of Wight DHA	15·4	14·2	14·8
Oxford Regional Health Authority			
East Berkshire DHA	9·3	9·6	9·4
West Berkshire DHA	8·5	9·2	8·9
Aylesbury Vale DHA	9·1	9·0	9·0
Wycombe DHA	9·4	9·3	9·4
Milton Keynes DHA	7·6	7·0	7·3
Kettering DHA	11·4	10·5	10·9
Northampton DHA	10·6	9·9	10·2
Oxfordshire DHA	8·8	8·9	8·8
South Western Regional Health Authority			
Bristol and Weston DHA	12·0	11·6	11·8
Frenchay DHA	11·1	9·9	10·5
Southmead DHA	10·6	10·9	10·8
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly DHA	14·0	12·7	13·3
Exeter DHA	13·6	14·0	13·8
North Devon DHA	12·9	12·7	12·8
Plymouth DHA	11·1	11·2	11·1

	M	*F*	*P*
Torbay DHA	16·0	15·5	15·7
Cheltenham and District DHA	12·2	11·6	11·9
Gloucester DHA	11·3	10·6	10·9
Somerset DHA	13·5	12·4	12·9
West Midlands Regional Health Authority			
Bromsgrove and Redditch DHA	9·0	8·8	8·9
Herefordshire DHA	12·5	11·7	12·1
Kidderminster and District DHA	12·0	11·0	11·5
Worcester and District DHA	11·4	11·5	11·4
Shropshire DHA	11·6	10·7	11·2
Mid Staffordshire DHA	10·1	9·1	9·6
North Staffordshire DHA	12·8	12·2	12·5
South East Staffordshire DHA	10·2	9·9	10·1
Rugby DHA	10·3	10·8	10·5
North Warwickshire DHA	11·4	9·6	10·5
South Warwickshire DHA	11·9	11·7	11·8
Central Birmingham DHA	12·1	10·8	11·4
East Birmingham DHA	12·8	11·9	12·4
North Birmingham DHA	11·5	12·0	11·8
South Birmingham DHA	12·4	12·6	12·5
West Birmingham DHA	12·3	11·7	12·0
Coventry DHA	12·1	9·9	11·0
Dudley DHA	11·2	10·6	10·9
Sandwell DHA	12·8	10·9	11·8
Solihull DHA	8·7	8·2	8·4
Walsall DHA	11·1	10·1	10·6
Wolverhampton DHA	12·1	11·3	11·7
Mersey Regional Health Authority			
Chester DHA	11·8	10·5	11·1
Crewe DHA	11·9	11·2	11·6
Halton DHA	9·6	10·0	9·8
Macclesfield DHA	11·0	11·9	11·5
Warrington DHA	11·5	11·6	11·5
Liverpool DHA	13·8	14·0	13·9
St. Helens and Knowsley DHA	11·2	10·8	11·0
Southport and Formby DHA	14·4	15·3	14·9
South Sefton DHA	12·2	11·8	12·0
Wirral DHA	12·8	12·8	12·8
North Western Regional Health Authority			
Lancaster DHA	15·4	16·4	15·9
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde DHA	17·7	16·9	17·3
Preston DHA	14·4	13·9	14·2
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley DHA	13·4	13·3	13·3
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale DHA	13·9	13·9	13·9
West Lancashire DHA	10·9	10·4	10·7
Chorley and South Ribble DHA	10·5	10·4	10·5
Bolton DHA	12·6	12·6	12·6
Bury DHA	12·7	12·9	12·8
North Manchester DHA	16·0	15·5	15·7
Central Manchester DHA	12·2	12·1	12·2
South Manchester DHA	12·5	13·9	13·2
Oldham DHA	12·6	13·3	12·9
Rochdale DHA	11·9	12·0	12·0
Salford DHA	14·0	14·3	14·2
Stockport DHA	11·4	11·7	11·6
Tameside and Glossop DHA	12·1	12·2	12·1
Trafford DHA	12·1	11·2	11·6
Wigan DHA	12·1	11·7	11·9
Wales			
Clwyd DHA	13·6	12·5	13·1
East Dyfed DHA	14·4	13·7	14·1
Pembrokeshire DHA	13·0	11·6	12·3
Gwent DHA	12·4	11·6	12·0
Gwynedd DHA	13·6	13·5	13·6
Mid Glamorgan DHA	12·5	12·1	12·3
Powys DHA	13·5	12·3	12·9
South Glamorgan DHA	11·6	11·7	11·6
West Glamorgan DHA	13·7	12·6	13·1
Scotland-Health Board Areas			
Borders	14·0	15·6	14·8
Forth Valley	12·1	11·5	11·8
Dumfries and Galloway	13·6	13·5	13·5
Fife	12·2	11·9	12·1
Grampian	11·7	11·7	11·7
Highland	12·5	12·1	12·3
Lothian	12·2	12·0	12·1
Argyll and Clyde	12·6	12·3	12·4
Ayrshire and Arran	12·6	12·9	12·8
Greater Glasgow	13·8	13·3	13·5
Lanarkshire	11·1	10·5	10·8
Tayside	13·0	13·8	13·4
Orkney Islands	14·5	11·6	13·0
Shetland Islands	10·5	10·0	10·2
Western Isles	15·8	12·8	14·3

M = Males.
F = Females
P = Persons

Table B: Crude mortality (all causes, all ages) rates per thousand population by sex and marital status
Great Britain—1985

	Males	*Females*	*Persons*
Married	14·9	6·7	10·8
Single	3·2	4·4	3·8
Widowed	96·0	55·2	63·0
Divorced	11·4	7·3	9·1
Total[1]	12·1	11·5	11·8

[1] Includes not stated marital status.

Unborn Children (Safeguards)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to improve methods of protection to safeguard the life of the unborn child.

Mr. Newton: We are aware of the strong and sincerely held views many people have about these issues. Successive Governments have held they should be decided by Parliament according to hon. Members' individual conscience. Our intention is to offer Parliament alternative clauses on human embryo research when legislation is brought forward following the Warnock report.

Member's Correspondence

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth might receive a reply to his letter dated 2 April which refers to Mr. R. Case of Mencap of Rugby;

(2) when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth might receive a reply to letters dated the 6 and 16 April concerning Mrs. Rosaleen Cunningham of Rugby.

Mr. Lyell: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 14 May.

Disabled People

Mr. Hind asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to how many people in the West Lancashire district council area are registered under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 as in need of assistance.

Mr. Major: I regret that the information requested is not available centrally. Information about the number of persons registered as disabled under section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 is collected only for social services authority areas.

Abortions

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many abortions have been performed upon girls aged under 16 years for the years 1980 to 1986.

Mr. Newton: The information is shown in the table.

Numbers of notifications of abortions carried out under the Abortion Act 1967 to women aged under 16 years, residents and non-residents England and Wales 1980-86

Year	*Number*
1980	4,143
1981	3,949
1982	4,343
1983	4,566
1984	4,609
1985	4,427
[1]1986	4,240

[1] Provisional.

Bournemouth General Hospital

Mr. David Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much will be the cost of the new Bournemouth general hospital.

Mrs. Currie: It is estimated that the cost of the first phase of this development, which is currently under construction, inclusive of enabling works, fees and equipment, will be £20.2 million. Approval in principle has also been given to the second phase of this development at an inclusive cost of £18 million.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Raynsford asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) why, in the light of the answer to the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle) on 22 April, *Official Report*, column 596, the revised draft housing benefit regulations have not yet been made available to local authorities; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he is considering deferring the implementation date for the new housing benefit scheme for April 1988 until a later date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle) today.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he proposes to lay regulations for the 1988 housing benefit reforms.

Mr. Fowler [*pursuant to the reply*, 22 April 1987, c. *596*]: As explained in the earlier reply, the regulations for the 1988 housing benefit reforms will be laid before Parliament when the Government's proposals on benefit rates are finalised in the autumn.

Revised draft regulations on the detailed structure of the new scheme will be issued to all local authorities on Monday 18 May following consultation on the earlier drafts. These regulations set out firm proposals on the detailed structure required for local authorities to prepare for implementation of the scheme in April 1988. Copies of the draft regulations will be placed in the Library.

The draft regulations confirm that from April 1988 the Government expect everyone who is liable to pay domestic rates to make a minimum contribution of 20 per cent. of their rates bill. However, when the rates for income support are set in the autumn, they will include the average amount that we expect householders who are income support claimants to have to meet as their minimum contribution. The details will be determined at the time the benefit rates are decided. This will mean that income support claimants will receive compensation in April 1988 in their benefit entitlement, whilst at the same time preserving the vital principle of local accountability. This compensation will also be reflected in the rates that will determine help for others on low incomes receiving housing benefit and family credit.

NHS (Bolton)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many jobs have been created in Bolton in the National Health Service *(a)* since 1979 and *(b)* since 1983.

Mr. Newton: Information is not held centrallly on new posts created. However, the number of staff employed in whole time equivalents at 30 September each year was:

	Number
1979	3,110
1983	3,380
1985	3,400

Source: DHSS Annual Censuses of NHS Medical and non-medical manpower.

NHS (Staff)

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many staff have been employed by the National Health Service in England for each year since 1979, expressed as whole-time equivalents as well as actual full-time and part-time numbers in the following categories: *(a)* nurses and midwives, *(b)* ancillaries, *(c)* administrative and clerical and *(d)* professional and technical.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Friern Barnet Hospital

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what resources have been made available to the Boroughs of Haringey, Camden and Islington to pay for community care following the closure of Friern Barnet hospital.

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of North-East Thames regional health authority for this information.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current annual cost and number of beds available in the Friern Barnet hospital; and what are the comparative figures for each year since 1980.

Mrs. Currie: The table gives the average number of beds available in the Friern Barnet hospital (including the Halliwick unit) from 1980 to 1985, the latest date for which figures are available centrally:

Year	*Number of beds*
1980	968
1981	962

Year	Number of beds
1982	962
1983	919
1984	894
1985	880

The hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of Hampstead health authority, which manages the Friern Barnet hospital, concerning the cost of providing this service.

Benefits

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people at *(a)* Finsbury park, *(b)* Highgate and *(c)* Hoxton Department of Health and Social Security offices were in receipt of supplementary benefit in April 1987, April 1983 and April 1979.

Mr. Lyell: The table shows the numbers of people receiving supplementary benefit from the three local offices serving the hon. Member's constituency on 10 February 1987—the latest date for which information is available—and on comparable dates in earlier years:

	20 February 1979	*15 February 1983*	*10 February 1987*
Finsbury Park	9,652	15,387	20,697
Highgate	11,404	16,959	18,641
Hoxton	7,430	11,132	13,378

Source: 100 per cent count of cases in action.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for each region, including Scotland and Wales, his most recent estimate of the total numbers *(a)* claiming and *(b)* dependent on supplementary benefits; and if he will also list the numbers (1) claiming supplementary allowance, (2) claiming supplementary pension, (3) dependent on supplementary pensions and (4) dependent on supplementary allowance.

Mr. Lyell *[pursuant to his reply,* 5 May 1987, c. *369-70]:* The information is as follows:

Social Security Region	*Claimants (thousands)*			*Numbers dependent (including claimants and partners) (thousands)*		
	Supplementary allowance	*Supplementary pension*	*Total*	*Supplementary allowance*	*Supplementary pension*	*Total*
North Eastern	490	266	756	995	313	1,308
London North	425	285	710	822	337	1,160
London South	368	257	626	686	293	979
Midlands	504	265	769	1,048	315	1,362
North Western	466	231	698	927	260	1,188
South Western	172	135	307	329	157	487
Wales	182	93	275	366	107	473
Scotland	318	150	468	600	171	772
Total	2,926	1,683	4,609	5,774	1,954	7,728

Source: Annual statistical inquiry: December 1984.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish figures for the latest date available, showing the average annual number of people in receipt of each of the following benefits, distinguishing in each case between claimants, adult dependants and child dependants: national insurance unemployment benefit, sickness benefit, invalidity, widows and retirement pensions, non-contributory invalidity pension and supplementary benefit without any national insurance benefit; and if he will estimate the corresponding figures for 1987-88.

Mr. Lyell *[pursuant to his reply,* 1 May 1987, c. *263]:* The available information is given in the table.

Thousands[6]

Benefit	*Number of recipients*[1]	*Number of dependants*[2]				*Date*	*Estimated average number for 1987-88*
		Adult only	*Adult and child*	*Child only*	*Total*		
Unemployment benefit	950	141	—	—	141	13 November 1986	825
Sickness benefit	95	46	—	—	46	30 March 1985	80
Invalidity benefit	915	281	77	34	391	30 March 1985	965
Widows pension	395	—	—	58	58	30 September 1986	385
Retirement pension	[7]9,555	127	10	8	145	30 September 1986	9,620
Severe disablement allowance[4]	245	4	1	1	7	30 March 1985	245
Supplementary benefit[3]	[6]2,711	663	—	[5]1,776	2,439	12 December 1984	[6]n.a.

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[1] Source (except supplementary benefit—Public Expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56)—figures for 1986-87.

[2] Source —statistical sampling.

[3] Source—Annual Statistical Enquiry 1984.

[4] Severe disablement allowance replaced NCIP from November 1984.

[5] Includes dependent children age 16 to 18.

[6] No comparable estimate can be made.

[7] Excludes non contributory RP.

[8] All figures to nearest thousand.

[9] Supplementary benefit load excluding claimants in receipt of national insurance benefits or pensions (other than industrial injury disablement benefits and pensions).

Waiting Lists

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the waiting list for *(a)* urgent and *(b)* non-urgent operations within the Islington health authority; and what are the comparative figures for April 1983 and April 1987.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member all the information he seeks in precisely the form requested. Waiting list information is collected centrally at 31 March, 30 September and 31 December annually according to consultant department. The available figures are given in the table. For the recent information requested the hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of the Islington district health authority.

Surgical in-patient waiting list at 31 March, 1983 NHS hospitals, Islington District Health Authority

	Number
Urgent cases	218
Non-urgent cases	905
All cases	1,123

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services to what extent figures for numbers on hospital waiting lists after 1 April 1987 will be comparable with those for numbers on hospital waiting lists before 1 April 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply,* 11 May 1987, c. *127*]: Following the 1982 recommendations of the first report of the Health Services Information Group, under Mrs. E. Körner, new central returns of numbers of people waiting for admission to a hospital bed were introduced on 1 April 1987. These returns have been designed to provide a more comprehensive picture of future demand on the National Health Service and the figures included in them will be extracted from more detailed sets of information held by district health authorities for management purposes.

The major differences between the counts of people waiting for hospital treatment before and after 1 April 1987 are:

(i) People waiting for treatment as day cases will be counted and separate figures given after 1 April 1987. Previously, only people expected to remain in hospital for at least one night were counted.

(ii) People who have refused an offer of admission to a hospital bed for personal reasons and whose condition continues to require hospital treatment will be counted in the figures of those waiting for hospital treatment at the end of each quarter after 1 April 1987. Previously such cases were not included in the biannual counts of people waiting for hospital treatment.

This latter change is likely to lead to a small rise in the count of the number of people waiting for hospital treatment, but a separate return will allow the impact of their inclusion on changes in the numbers of people waiting for hospital treatment to be assessed. The new returns will give more detailed information about the length of time patients on the list have been waiting.

Hospital Buildings

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to the average age of hospital buildings.

Mrs. Currie: The information is as follows:

Approximately 7 per cent. of NHS buildings were built before 1890

Approximately 80 per cent. of NHS buildings were built before 1918

Approximately 5 per cent. of NHS buildings were built between 1919 and 1939

Approximately 6 per cent. of NHS buildings were built between 1940 and 1964

Approximately 7 per cent. of NHS buildings were built after 1965.

Nurses

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the Department of Health and Social Security report on nursing shortages in London reported to the National Health Service management board; what conclusions it reached; and if he will publish the report.

Mr. Newton: The group has not yet reported.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the National Health Service management board steering group will report on its study of nursing services in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply,* 12 May 1987, c. *123*]: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) today.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received from nurses about nurses' pay and conditions since the announcement on 23 April of the Government's response to the 1987 recommendations of the Review Body for Nurses and Midwives Remuneration; and if he will make a statement about nursing shortages *(a)* in London, *(b)* in the South-East Thames region, and *(c)* in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply,* 12 May 1987, c. *123*]: We have not received any representations from nurses about nurses' pay and conditions since the announcement on 23 April. Information about nursing shortages is not collected centrally. The group examining nursing shortages in London has not yet reported.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will give details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mrs. Currie: Information about the expenditure on heating and lighting and energy efficiency measures in properties occupied by public bodies coming within my right hon. Friend's responsibility is not available.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mrs. Currie: My right hon. Friend has direct responsibilities for expenditure by the Department and for the expenditure of the National Health Service. The total expenditure during 1986-87 upon heating and lighting for properties occupied by the Department was £9·9 million. The total for National Health Service properties during 1986-87 is not yet available; however, for the year 1985-86 the total was £290 million.

Expenditure on energy efficiency measures is incurred by the Property Services Agency as well as the Department on buildings occupied by DHSS. Information on such expenditure is not available. A departmental energy efficiency manager has been appointed to improve energy efficiency in the Department. In addition, energy efficiency measures are included within the responsibilities of accommodation staff located in buildings occupied by the Department.

The expenditure on energy efficiency measures by the National Health Service is not recorded separately and thus is not available. However, considerable effort is made by local health authorities to reduce their energy bills, while modern hospitals and other National Health Service buildings are designed to be energy efficient.

Health Provision, Leicester

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much money has been spent on improving health provision in Leicester since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Revenue expenditure in Leicestershire has increased from £59·2 million in 1978-79 to £145·2 million in 1985-86 (the latest centrally available year). This represents an increase of 30 per cent. in real terms. Leicestershire is now substantially better off than in 1979 and is within 4 per cent. of its target share of resources. In cash terms £76·6 million was spent in the district between 1978-79 and 1985-86 on capital projects (£99·2 million at 1985-86 prices).

Since 1979 capital projects at Glenfield general hospital, Leicester general hospital and the Towers hospital have been started and completed. Work is currently under way on the new Coalville community hospital and there are various capital schemes in the process of planning and design at Glenfield, Leicester royal infirmary, Hinckley and Loughborough. Since 1979 in-patient cases have risen from 74,454 to 95,365 in 1985, an increase of 28 per cent; day cases from 10,797 to 22,516, an increase of 109 per cent.; and out-patient attendances from 466,873 to 573,962, an increase of 23 per cent. We have allocated the district an additional £216,700 this year for use in reducing waiting lists. Other developments due to take place this year include the opening of a new bone marrow unit at the royal infirmary, extra nurses for treating cancer patients and improvements in services for drug misusers.

Arnold Lodge Towers Hospital (Escape)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has now received a report from the Leicestershire health authority on the recent escapes from Arnold Lodge Towers hospital, Leicester; and what guidance he has given to the health authority on this matter.

Mrs. Currie: The inquiry set up by Leicestershire health authority into the recent incidents at the Arnold Lodge secure unit is not yet complete. The question of guidance to the health authority will be dependent upon the outcome of the inquiry.

Social Services (Review)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when he expects to publish his review of social services; and if he will list all those organisations which submitted evidence;

(2) if charges and responsibility for home helps, meals on wheels and centres for the disabled and elderly have come within the terms of the review on social services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 14 May.

Diabetics (Disposable Syringes)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he now expects negotiations with manufacturers to be completed on supplying free disposable syringes and needles to diabetics; when he expects to make an announcement on their availability; and when he expects the scheme to commence.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) on 14 May.

Public Health Laboratory Service Board

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the budget for the Public Health Laboratory Service Board for 1987-88.

Mr. Fowler: The 1987-88 budget for the PHLSB will be £39·5 million. This amount is £4·8 million over last year's allocation and includes £2·5 million in recognition of the additional work it is currently undertaking, particularly on AIDS.

Condom Imports

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make it his policy to ensure that all imported makes of condoms available for sale in the United Kingdom are subject to a British standards test for safety.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *295*]: The current British standard (BS7304) relates to condoms for use in vaginal intercourse. We endorse the advice issued by the Family Planning Association that people should check that condoms conform to this standard. As far as the Health Service is concerned, general guidance already exists urging health authorities to purchase only products which conform to British standard specifications.

Health Authorities (Computers)

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will call for a report from the chairman of Wessex regional health authority on the fulfilment of contractual obligations by Technicon since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 Janurry 1987, c. *112-13*]: The chairman of the Wessex regional health authority is not in a position to report on all of Technicon's business activities since 1979.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his replies to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), *Official Report*, 8 December 1986, column *71*, and 15 December 1986, column *421*, on what basis and by whom the tendering companies for the Wessex regional health authority computer contract were selected; what was the nature and extent of the advice sought from PACTEL on this matter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 January 1987, c. *112-13*]: I understand from the regional health authority that the tendering companies were selected under the EC-GATT arrangements. All companies expressing an interest were asked to respond to a requirement synopsis and were subsequently shortlisted against approximately 20 predetermined criteria. Shortlisting was undertaken by selection panels appointed by the authority's information committee.

PACTEL was involved in assisting the authority by: *(a)* drafting synopses and invitations to tender against which suppliers' responses were solicited; *(b)* advising selection panels; *(c)* carrying out technical assessments, and *(d)* advising on contractual processes.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), *Official Report*, 8 December 1986, column *72*, if he will ask the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency to undertake the revision of his Department's guidance to regional health authorities on computer procurement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 January 1987, c. *112-13*]: The Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency has no responsibility for the National Health Service and it would be inappropriate for that agency to revise any NHS procedures. The guidance which I referred to in my reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras closely accords with the agency's guidance to Government Departments.

Blood Products

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when his Department first became aware of the threat to haemophiliacs from imported factor VIII in relation to *(a)* hepatitis and *(b)* HIV virus;

(2) when heat-treatment of imported factor VIII was initiated; and when all haemophiliacs were first able to obtain access to safe factor VIII;

(3) what was the original completion date proposed for the blood products laboratory at Elstree; what is the completion date now; when Britain will be self sufficient in blood products; and what are the reasons for the development slipping behind schedule.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his replies*, 16 February 1987, c. *510-13*]: It became evident in the United Kingdom in 1974 that the use of imported factor VIII was associated with non-A, non-B hepatitis. Progress to eliminate this risk has been limited because the agent responsible has not yet been identified. Clinical trials of factor VIII are in progress to assess if certain heat treatments inactivate the agent.

Evidence emerged in the United States of America in 1982 that haemophiliacs were contracting AIDS and although the mechanism of infection was not known, it was presumed that it had been transmitted through the use of blood products such as factor VIII.

The first account of experimental work which showed that HIV in factor VIII could be inactivated by heat treatment was published in October 1984 ("Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 1984", Vol. 33, 589-91). This work led to the National Haemophilia Society of the United States of America advising that heat-treated factor VIII should be considered for haemophiliacs even though its protection against AIDS remained to be proven. Similar advice was published in the United Kingdom in December 1984 (*Lancet* 1984, Vol. 2, 1433-1435). However, not until February 1985 (*Lancet* 1985, Vol. 1, 271-272) was evidence published which showed that heat treatment of factor VIII actually reduced transmission of HIV to haemophiliacs.

Health Care (North-West)

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the national average cost of health care per man, woman and child; and what is the comparable figure for the north-west region.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 February 1987, c. *402*]: The available information is set out in the following table:

Expenditure on health care per head of population

	£
All England	293·27
North-Western RHA	308·85

Notes:

(i) The expenditure figures used are derived from the annual accounts for 1985-86 of regional and district health authorities, the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals and family practitioner committees.

(ii) Expenditure on family practitioner services cannot be strictly assigned to regional boundaries, but for north-western region has been obtained from the accounts of the committees lying geographically within that region's area.

(iii) Population figures are at estimated mid 1985 levels.

Actual allocations to regional health authorities and family practitioner services are calculated differently. In determining the level of resources for regional health authorities, the methodology of the resource allocation working party (RAWP) is followed, which weights regionally managed populations to determine the relative need for health care. Expenditure on family practitioner services, however, is governed by the level of current demand of the population served. The expenditure rates in the above table are calculated from unweighted populations.

Acute Beds

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each year from 1979 to 1986 the total number of hospitals with acute beds and the total number of acute beds in each health district.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 27 April 1987, c. *33*]: For information on the number of acute beds in each district health authority in 1979 and 1985, I refer the hon. Member to my reply on 19 January 1987 at columns *443-50*. The information on hospitals that can be provided without incurring disproportionate cost is given in the table.

Number of National Health Service hospitals[1] in England with acute beds.

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	*1979*	*1985*
Northern Regional Health Authority		
Hartlepool	3	2
North Tees	1	1
South Tees	14	11
East Cumbria	[2]—	8
South Cumbria	[2]—	5
West Cumbria	6	5
Darlington	3	3
Durham	4	3
North West Durham	3	2
South West Durham	6	5
Northumberland	13	12
Gateshead	5	5
Newcastle	9	7
North Tyneside	5	4
South Tyneside	3	2
Sunderland	7	7
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority		
Hull	7	6
East Yorkshire	8	8
Grimsby	5	2
Scunthorpe	6	7
Northallerton	5	5
York	5	4
Scarborough	5	5
Harrogate	5	4
Bradford	10	8
Airedale	7	4
Calderdale	3	3
Huddersfield	3	3
Dewsbury	4	4
Leeds Western	[2]—	8
Leeds Eastern	[2]—	4
Wakefield	4	3
Pontefract	4	4
Trent Regional Health Authority		
North Derbyshire	9	6
Southern Derbyshire	13	11
Leicestershire	18	15
North Lincolnshire	10	6
South Lincolnshire	7	7
Bassetlaw	3	3
Central Nottinghamshire	9	8
Nottingham	9	4
Barnsley	1	1
Doncaster	[2]—	3
Rotherham	[2]—	4
Sheffield	11	9
East Anglian Regional Health Authority		
Cambridge	[2]—	5
Peterborough	8	6
West Suffolk	[2]—	3
East Suffolk	[2]—	8
Norwich	16	14
Great Yarmouth and Waveney	7	7
West Norfolk and Wisbech	10	3
Huntingdon	[2]—	2
North West Thames Regional Health Authority		
North Bedfordshire	4	3
South Bedfordshire	5	3
North Hertfordshire	4	3
East Hertfordshire	4	4
North West Hertfordshire	3	3
South West Hertfordshire	5	5
Barnet	9	8
Harrow	2	1
Hillingdon	7	5
Hounslow and Spelthorne	[2]—	4
Ealing	6	3
Brent	2	3
Paddington and North Kensington	9	8
Riverside	10	7
North East Thames Regional Health Authority		
Basildon and Thurrock	4	3
Mid Essex	5	7
North East Essex	12	11
West Essex	8	6
Southend	2	2
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	8	7
Hampstead	[2]—	3
Bloomsbury	[2]—	15
Islington	[2]—	3
City and Hackney	6	6
Newham	9	4
Tower Hamlets	5	2
Enfield	4	3
Haringey	4	3
Redbridge	3	3
Waltham Forest	7	5
South East Thames Regional Health Authority		
Brighton	11	9
Eastbourne	4	3
Hastings	7	5
South East Kent	8	5
Canterbury and Thanet	12	10
Dartford and Gravesham	4	4
Maidstone	4	4
Medway	6	8
Tunbridge Wells	11	10
Bexley	2	2
Greenwich	6	4
Bromley	5	4
West Lambeth	[2]—	4
Camberwell	4	3
Lewisham and North Southwark	7	5
South West Thames Regional Health Authority		
North West Surrey	6	7
West Surrey and North East Hampshire	3	3
South West Surrey	5	4
Mid Surrey	6	5
East Surrey	7	5
Chichester	4	4
Mid Downs	5	5
Worthing	4	4
Croydon	6	3
Kingston and Esher	[2]—	5
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	[2]—	4
Wandsworth	9	3
Merton and Sutton	9	6

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	*1979*	*1985*
Wessex Regional Health Authority		
East Dorset	10	8
West Dorset	10	10
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire	8	7
Southampton and South West Hampshire	14	14
Winchester	3	3
Basingstoke and North Hampshire	4	4
Salisbury	3	5
Swindon	4	4
Bath	16	15
Isle of Wight	5	5
Oxford Regional Health Authority		
East Berkshire	7	7
West Berkshire	8	7
Aylesbury Vale	[2]—	3
Wycombe	5	5
Milton Keynes	[2]—	2
Kettering	5	4
Northampton	6	4
Oxfordshire	20	20
South Western Regional Health Authority		
Bristol and Weston	12	10
Frenchay	4	4
Southmead	6	5
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	14	13
Exeter	16	17
North Devon	[2]—	7
Plymouth	[2]—	11
Torbay	15	15
Cheltenham	[2]—	9
Gloucester	[2]—	10
Somerset	15	14
West Midlands Regional Health Authority		
Bromsgrove and Redditch	7	6
Herefordshire	9	9
Kidderminster and District	2	2
Worcester and District	8	7
Shropshire	17	17
Mid Staffordshire	5	4
North Staffordshire	9	11
South East Staffordshire	6	6
Rugby	3	2
North Warwickshire	[2]—	2
South Warwickshire	[2]—	4
Central Birmingham	[2]—	5
East Birmingham	1	1
North Birmingham	4	5
South Birmingham	[2]—	6
West Birmingham	[2]	6
Coventry	5	5
Dudley	7	7
Sandwell	5	3
Solihull	[2]—	2
Walsall	3	3
Wolverhampton	7	5
Mersey Regional Health Authority		
Chester	5	4
Crewe	6	5
Halton	2	2
Macclesfield	8	7
Warrington	3	2
Liverpool	14	14
St. Helens and Knowsley	3	4
Southport and Formby	5	4
South Sefton	2	2
Wirral	12	3
North Western Regional Health Authority		
Lancaster	4	4
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	7	7
Preston	[2]—	3
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	5	7
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	6	5
West Lancashire	3	3
Chorley and South Ribble	[2]—	1
Bolton	5	4
Bury	4	5
North Manchester	6	5
Central Manchester	4	4
South Manchester	4	4
Oldham	4	3
Rochdale	4	2
Salford	6	5
Stockport	6	6
Tameside and Glossop	3	2
Trafford	7	4
Wigan	4	4
Special Health Authorities		
The Hospitals for Sick Children	3	2
The National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	4	4
Moorfields Eye Hospital	1	1
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals	1	1
The National Heart and Chest Hospitals	5	3
The Royal Marsden Hospital	2	2
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's	[2]—	3

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[1] Figures are based on a count of hospitals which provide residential facilities during the year. Day hospitals and clinics are therefore not included.

[2] Comparable figures not readily available because of NHS restructuring on 1 April 1982.

Pensioners

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the cost of giving single pensioners with no other sources of income an extra £5 per week and pensioner couples £8 per week assuming no change in social security benefits.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 April 1987, c. *113*]: Information is not available on the net cost of such a change. The basic retirement pension is not paid on an income-related basis, and no firm estimate is available of the numbers of pensioners for whom it is the sole source of income. Most pensioners who have little more than the basic pension would be entitled to supplementary pension and housing benefit. About 375,000 single pensioners and 25,000 pensioner couples who receive supplementary pension have no significant source of income other than their basic retirement pension and supplementary pension/housing benefit. It would cost about £110 million gross to increase retirement pension by £5 or £8 to this group. Assuming supplementary pension and housing benefit levels remained unchanged, the net cost of such an increase in retirement pension would be substantially less. An accurate estimate could be made only at disproportionate cost.

Cervical Screening

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the largest current delay in each health region known to his Department in providing cervical smears through pathology laboratories.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 5 May 1987, c. *380*]: The latest information available centrally was provided to the Department in February, when 157 districts in England reported that their laboratories examining cervical smears were meeting our target of holding no more than one month's work. The longest delay in each region known to the Department is set out in the table.

Longest laboratory delay in processing cervical smears in each region as at 16 February 1987 (or 31 December 1986 where indicated)

Region	*District*	*Delay weeks*
Northern	Newcastle	12/13
Yorkshire (31 December 1986)	Scunthorpe	4
Trent	Nottingham	13
East Anglian	Cambridge	6
North West Thames (31 December 1986)	Barnet	7/9
North East Thames (31 December 1986)	Bloomsbury	8
South East Thames	Dartford and Gravesham	11
South West Thames	South West Surrey	3
Wessex	Bath	3
Oxford	Oxfordshire	11
South Western (31 December 1986)	Plymouth	8
West Midlands	Worcester	8
Mersey	Wirral	5
North Western (31 December 1986)	Bury	3

Health Authorities (Staff)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the numbers of non-medical staff employed by district health authorities for 1982-83 and for the latest year available in the manner of the reply to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) of 10 December, *Official Report*, column *218*.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 May 1987, c. *377*]: Tables giving the information requested have been placed in the Library. The September 1985 figures, given in the earlier reply to the hon. Member are still the latest available to this level of detail.

Physical and Sensory Disabilities

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the total annual expenditure by social services departments in England on people with physical and sensory disabilities in each of the last 10 years at 1986-87 prices.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 May 1987, c. *572*]: I regret that information collected centrally does not enable a comprehensive figure for total personal social services expenditure on people with physical and sensory disabilities to be provided, because many of the relevant services, such as home helps and other support services, are provided to all disabled people and to the elderly, many of whom have physical and sensory disabilities.

Telford District Hospital

Mr. Hawksley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the new Telford district hospital will open; and to what extent immediate use will be made of the accident and emergency facilities.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *126*]: As my hon. Friend is aware, the management of major new schemes in the National Health Service building programme is the responsibility of the regional health authority. I understand, however, that the Telford district general hospital is planned to open early in 1989. The accident and emergency department will open in full at that time.

Family Planning and Well Women Clinics (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey of 10 April, *Official Report*, column *507*, if he will state in the *Official Report* his response to representations he has received from the North Hertfordshire community health council and from members of the public about the closure of family planning clinics and well women clinics in North Herfordshire district health authority.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to the reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *128*]: Resource allocation to North Hertfordshire health authority is a matter for the North-West Thames regional health authority. The district had proposed reductions in services to cope with increased financial pressures. I understand that the regional health authority has now agreed to provide some interim assistance for North Hertfordshire for the current year amounting to £350,000. I am replying to the CHC in these terms and am arranging for similar responses to letters from members of the public.

Clinical Services (Competitive Tendering)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement about his policy in relation to the scope for and the applicability of competitive tendering for clinical services generally.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 May 1987, c. *130*]: Health authorities are free to decide for themselves how best to provide clinical services, including the possibility of making contractual arrangements with the private or voluntary sectors, and seeking tenders for such arrangements if they wish. Guidance about such contractual arrangements was issued to health authorities in January 1981; a copy of the relevant circular (HC(81)1) is in the Library.

Hospitals

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the costing returns submitted by health authorities in England showing total current expenditure on hospitals categorised as pre-convalescent and convalescent for each year from 1979 to date.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 30 April 1987, c. *221-22*]: The information requested is as follows.

Year	*Expenditure £*
1979-80	13,458,656
1980-81	10,349,329
1981-82	10,758,114
1982-83	9,943,684
1983-84	9,657,117
1984-85	6,911,744
1985-86	5,500,259

The level and extent of provision of convalescence beds is a matter for local decision. Modern concepts of patient care and rehabilitation have resulted in a diminishing demand for convalescence in its traditional form.

Telephone Information Services

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the health topics for which there are telephone advice or information services wholly or partly subsidised by his Department; and if he has any plans to extend the range of telephone information services he subsidises.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *127*]: The Department directly funds the following organisations for the following services:

SCODA (Standing Conference on Drug Abuse)—Drugs Misuse
BSS (Broadcasting Support Services)—AIDS

In addition, many of the agencies funded partially or wholly by the Department operate information and advice services. Subjects covered are:

Community Health Initiatives
Child abuse ("Childline" and "Touchline")
Senile and pre-senile dementia
Anorexia and bulimia nervosa
Bereavement counselling
Mental health services and issues
Ethnic minorities' mental health matters
Schizophrenia
Phobias
Psychological support to rape victims
Suicidal/despairing people
Women's mental health issues
Migraine
Women's health issues
Mental handicaps
Advice to elderly and disabled people.

Currently under consideration are grants to voluntary bodies hoping to set up telephone services dealing with:

Cancer
Health problems and non-English speakers.

EMPLOYMENT

Skillcentres

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General (1) if he will list the skillcentres open in *(a)* June 1979 and *(b)* June 1986; and if he will give the unemployment rate for each of the centre's respective travel-to-work areas at those times;

(2) if he will list the number of trainees completing courses, and the total training weeks offered for each skillcentre, for each year since 1979 for which figures are available.

Mr. Trippler: The available information is contained in the table.

	1984-85		*1985-86*		*1986-87*			
	Number of trainees completing courses	*Total training weeks offered*	*Number of trainees completing courses*	*Total training weeks offered*	*Number of trainees completing courses*	*Total training weeks offered*	*Travel-to-work area*[6]	*Unemployment rate*[5][6] *12 June 1986 per cent.*
Barking	119	7,257	217	8,455	477	9,783	London	10·4
Basildon	167	6,998	163	5,466	162	6,351	Southend	13·7
Bellshill	332	10,928	879	10,307	532	12,191	Lanarkshire	20·6
Bellshill Annexe[4]	85	2,957	—	—	—	—		
Billingham	158	6,366	279	7,204	251	9,517	Stockton-on-Tees	18·8
Birmingham	396	16,643	621	15,992	834	29,558	Birmingham	16·0
Birmingham (Castle Bromwich)[3]	387	10,671	184	6,256	—	—		
Birmingham YTC[3]	138	3,937	—	1,846	—	—		
Bradford	515	8,571	287	6,131	504	9,255	Bradford	15·3
Bristol	668	17,019	654	14,237	690	16,722	Bristol	10·7
Bristol Annexe[3]	91	2,603	8	—	—	—		
Cardiff	182	10,968	426	18,009	517	11,466	Cardiff	13·9
Charlton[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—	London	10·4
Chelmsford	70	2,728	100	3,075	87	2,952	Chelmsford and Braintree	7·8
Cheshire (Runcorn)	212	5,899	215	5,412	216	7,078	Widnes and Runcorn	18·6
Chesterfield	82	3,818	81	3,634	169	3,968	Chesterfield	14·6
Coventry	363	7,962	273	6,993	364	7,874	Coventry and Hinckley	14·9
Cumbria (Maryport)	134	3,307	109	3,105	133	4,912	Carlisle	11·7
Deptford	159	13,512	391	11,345	698	15,340	London	10·4
Doncaster[3]	198	7,696	119	2,528	—	—	Doncaster	20·5
Dumbarton[3]	64	5,315	14	115	—	—	Dumbarton	19·2
Dundee	183	7,352	561	6,840	467	6,986	Dundee	16·2
Dunfermline	239	7,141	242	6,240	339	7,235	Dunfermline	16·0
Durham	291	10,624	326	10,196	303	12,837	Durham	13·9
East Lancashire	305	7,314	338	7,235	302	7,792	Accrington and Rossendale	14·1
Edinburgh	347	7,249	334	8,456	370	8,700	Edinburgh	11·3
Edinburgh Annexe[4]	147	2,811	—	—	—	—		
Enfield	311	11,684	298	10,032	759	10,703	London	10·4
Glasgow (Queenslie)[3]	159	6,466	16	136	—	—	Glasgow	17·1
Glasgow (Hillington)	255	7,789	784	11,708	681	14,359		
Glasgow (Hillington) Annexe[4]	63	1,119	—	—	—	—		
Gloucester	340	8,034	409	8,200	685	12,321	Gloucester	9·1
Gloucester Annexe[3]	82	3,146	86	2,134	—	—		
Gwent (Newport)	277	10,413	627	11,161	757	12,177	Newport	15·5
Hull	289	10,712	545	6,480	694	9,129	Hull	16·6
Ipswich	92	5,831	147	5,767	170	5,538	Ipswich	8·5
Irvine	154	5,403	191	4,830	245	4,796	Irvine	24·4
Killingworth[3]	271	11,239	79	4,823	—	—	Newcastle upon Tyne	18·3
Kirkby-in-Ashfield[3]	161	4,976	275	2,754	—	—	Nottingham	13·3

	1984-85		1985-86		1986-87			
	Number of trainees completing courses	*Total training weeks offered*	*Number of trainees completing courses*	*Total training weeks offered*	*Number of trainees completing courses*	*Total training weeks offered*	*Travel-to-work area*[6]	*Unemployment rate*[5][6] *12 June 1986 per cent.*
Lambeth	—	—	64	663	348	7,418	London	10·4
Lambeth YTC[2]	—	3,467	—	—	—	—	London	10·4
Leeds	401	16,536	483	9,769	650	12,902	Leeds	12·3
Leicester	450	9,557	236	7,160	452	8,447	Leicester	10·4
Letchworth	245	14,165	462	14,319	575	15,583	Hitchin and Letchworth	8·1
Liverpool (MATU)	600	6,240	549	7,970	791	13,053	Liverpool	20·3
Liverpool (old)[3]	582	18,720	125	4,129	—	—		
Llanelli[3]	140	5,029	114	2,035	—	—	Llanelli	17·8
Long Eaton[3]	299	7,113	254	5,636	—	—	Nottingham	13·3
Manchester (Denton)[3]	186	7,904	103	2,375	623	—		
Manchester (Trafford Park)	349	15,028	477	10,861	—	12,875	Manchester	14·0
Manchester (Hindley Annexe)[4]	127	4,765	—	—	—	—		
Medway	226	10,953	306	11,385	463	12,926	Medway and Maidstone	11·9
Medway Annexe (Sittingbourne)[4]	136	4,767	111	2,793	—	—	Sittingbourne and Sheerness	14·0
Middlesbrough[3]	123	7,070	75	1,775	—	—	Middlesbrough	21·9
Millbrook (Southampton)	238	8,440	271	7,130	154	6,221	Southampton	10·6
Milton Keynes	140	4,717	153	5,451	427	5,444	Milton Keynes	12·7
North Staffordshire	393	5,796	212	4,749	274	5,536	Stoke	11·8
Northampton	69	1,883	89	1,881	107	3,318	Northampton	9·5
Norwich	147	7,535	250	7,160	381	7,656	Norwich	10·0
Nottingham (Long Eaton Annexe)	145	4,103	136	4,779	382	9,577	Nottingham	13·3
Perivale	137	7,869	160	6,667	146	6,271	London	10·4
Peterborough	184	5,956	162	5,445	180	5,725	Peterborough	12·5
Plymouth	240	7,944	438	8,208	496	12,557	Plymouth	14·4
Plymouth Annexe[3]	126	2,938	121	1,967	—	—		
Portsmouth	292	9,379	277	8,231	311	8,826	Portsmouth	12·0
Preston	333	9,984	300	5,927	329	6,968	Preston	11·2
Reading	171	4,790	178	6,309	194	7,573	Reading	7·2
Redditch[3]	81	5,344	218	4,114	—	—	Birmingham	16·0
Redruth	265	6,561	311	6,599	340	8,043	Redruth and Camborne	20·5
Rochdale	233	10,192	286	6,180	387	8,127	Rochdale	17·4
St. Helens	263	8,528	211	5,896	331	8,308	Wigan and St. Helens	18·8
Sheffield	378	16,016	359	8,246	241	9,815	Sheffield	16·1
Slough	205	8,063	226	8,405	213	7,324	Slough	6·5
Slough Annexe[3]	193	5,400	159	4,916	—	—		
Southampton	307	9,613	319	961	346	11,604	Southampton	10·6
Swindon	279	7,568	228	6,509	255	8,829	Swindon	12·0
Twickenham	111	7,341	262	8,698	322	9,791	Heathrow	7·1
Tyneside	319	12,765	737	12,449	573	17,827	South Tyneside	25·9
Tyneside Annexe[4]	5	13	—	—	—	—		
Waddon[3]	64	3,431	64	1,156	—	—	London	10·4
Waddon Annexe[3]	68	5,271	49	2,552	—	—		
Wakefield	257	14,248	206	4,727	277	6,215	Wakefield and Dewsbury	15·2
West Glamorgan	220	9,508	477	9,826	871	12,687	Neath and Port Talbot	14·7
West Gwent[3]	347	5,380	87	1,804	—	—	Newport	15·5
West Sussex	156	5,994	295	8,487	414	11,795	Worthing	8·3
West Sussex Annexe[3]	143	5,441	87	2,993	—	—		
Wigan	267	8,632	192	4,872	259	7,025	Wigan and St. Helens	18·8
Wolverhampton	247	9,308	321	7,415	477	10,090	Wolverhampton	18·3
Wolverhampton Annexe[3]	63	4,074	87	4,546	—	—		
Worsley (Manchester Annexe)[3]	194	6,032	36	1,198	—	—	Manchester	14·0
Wrexham	311	7,478	334	6,647	349	6,579	Wrexham	16·7
Total	19,951	679,507	21,935	521,280	24,344	572,484		

[1] No figures available. Charlton skillcentre closed during 1985-86.

[2] Trainees completed their courses at other skillcentres.

[3] This skillcentre annexe closed down during 1985-86 and the figures for 1985-86 are correspondingly reduced.

[4] This annexe closed during 1985-86. Separate statistics for 1985-86 are no longer available.

[5] The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed expressed as a percentage of employees in employment plus the unemployed.

[6] Comparable unemployment statistics are not available for 1979 because of major revisions to travel-to-work area boundaries in 1984 and changes in the method of compiling the unemployment figures. Statistics of unemployed registrants in 1979 in travel-to-work areas as defined in 1978 are available in the Library.

[7] The Blaenau Gwent skillcentre closed in February 1983. The unemployment rate in that month in the Ebbw Vale travel-to-work area was 24·3 per cent. This area is now covered by the Blaenau, Gwent and Abvergavenny travel-to-work area, and the unemployment rate for this area on 12 June 1986 was 19·5 per cent.

Self-employed Persons (Bradford)

Mr. Lawler asked the Paymaster General what was the change in the number of self-employed in Bradford between 1979 and 1987.

Mr. Lee: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme (Bradford)

Mr. Lawler asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently on the enterprise allowance scheme in Bradford; and how many have completed the 12 months scheme since it started.

Mr. Trippier: The figures are not available in the form requested. Figures for the Batley area (which includes

Bradford) team show that on 12 May 1987 there were 1,765 people on the enterprise allowance scheme and that 5,051 people had entered the scheme since its inception. There are no figures available for the number of entrants who completed the full 12 months on the scheme.

Job Creation

Mr. Cartwright asked the Paymaster General what is his estimate of new jobs created in the economy in each year from 1979 to 1986, divided between (i) full-time jobs, (ii) part-time jobs and (iii) self-employed people.

Mr. Trippier: We have no means of knowing the number of new jobs created in the economy.

However, between June 1979 and December 1986 the annual net changes in the size of the employed labour force in Great Britain for each of the categories specified were as follows:

Employed labour force in Great Britain (adjusted seasonal variations)

Difference between June of each year	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Of which all self-employed*
1979—1980	−209,000	148,000	108,000
1980—1981	−870,000	−82,000	108,000
1981—1982	−435,000	10,000	51,000
1982—1983	−317,000	27,000	[illegible]
1983—1984	237,000	216,000	275,000
1984—1985	224,000	163,000	116,000
1985—1986	—50,000	157,000	15,000
1986 (June)—1986 (December)	61,000	80,000	52,000

Since 1983 the total employed labour force has grown by 1,130,000 with increases in full-time and part-time employment and self-employment.

Mr. Thurnham asked the Paymaster General how many new jobs have been created in Bolton as a result of Government measures *(a)* since 1979 and *(b)* since 1983; and if he will break this down between (i) the enterprise allowance scheme, (ii) help to local enterprise agencies, (iii) the community programme, (iv) regional grants and (v) other measures.

Mr. Lee: It is not possible to give the information in the form requested. Since May 1979 Department of Trade and Industry selective assistance in the Bolton and Bury travel-to-work area will support the creation of about 2,200 new jobs and help safeguard about a further 2,100 if the prospects go ahead as planned; since 1983 the corresponding figures are 1,200 new jobs and 880 safeguarded.

The number of participants on the community programme and enterprise allowance scheme in the Manchester north-west area since 1983 were 17,682 and 3,113 respectively. Participant figures for the community programme and enterprise allowance scheme are not available prior to 1983. The local enterprise agency, Bolton Business Venture, which last year received £20,000 support under the Government's local enterprise agency grant scheme, reported in 1986 that since its inception in 1983 it has given advice to some 2,000 people and had helped in the creation of over 700 jobs.

We shall continue to pursue sound economic policies for steady growth and low inflation which have so far produced more than a million new jobs since 1983.

Industrial Wage

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Paymaster General what is the average industrial wage.

Mr. Lee: The latest available information on the average gross weekly earnings of full-time adult employees in manufacturing industries relates to April 1986, and is published in table 5.6 of "Labour Market Data" in the November 1986 issue of *Employment Gazette*, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Playspace (Bradford)

Mr. Madden asked the Paymaster General if the Manpower Services Commission will provide long-term funding for Playspace, a children's play project in Bradford; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Playspace is currently funded under the community programme as part of the Bradford metropolitan borough council's agency. The agency has decided that it does not wish to support the project after December 1987. The Manpower Services Commission can fund community programme projects for up to 52 weeks. Sponsors should seek longer-term funding from other sources for services which are likely to fulfil a continuing need. I understand Playspace is now engaged in seeking alternative sources of funding.

Islington, North

Mr. Corbyn asked the Paymaster General what is the current rate of *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* young persons unemployment in Islington, North; and what are the comparative statistics for May 1983, May 1979 and May 1974.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is not available. Male and female unemployment rates are calculated only for self-contained labour market areas; the smallest such areas are travel-to-work areas. Islington, North forms only a small part of the London travel-to-work area. Unemployment rates by age are not calculated below national level.

Manufacturing (Apprentices)

Mr. Nellist asked the Paymaster General what is his Department's latest estimate of the number of full-time apprentices currently employed in British manufacturing industry; and what was the comparable number in 1979.

Mr. Trippier: In March 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 64,000 apprentices employed in the manufacturing industries in Great Britain. In May 1979 (there are no figures for March) the figure was 155,000. The estimates do not distinguish between full-time and part-time apprentices. The numbers entering traditional apprenticeships are becoming increasingly irrelevant as a measure of the real level of skills training being undertaken by industry because of both the reform of existing training arrangements and the substantial provision of initial skills training now taking place under YTS.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Paymaster General what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will give details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Trippier: I regret that this information is available only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Paymaster General if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Trippier: I regret that this information is not available in the form requested. Fuel and utility charges (excluding water) for 1986-87 for the Department of Employment group were some £10 million. The amounts spent on energy efficiency measures are not available centrally.

Job Training Scheme (Managing Agents)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Paymaster General if he will list in the *Official Report* those bodies and organisations which have been contracted as managing agents for the new job training scheme to date in the relevant Manpower Services Commission areas.

Mr. Trippier: The Manpower Services Commission are negotiating and signing contracts with managing agents. As soon as the list is published it will be placed in the Library.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Allen McKay asked the Paymaster General if he will give the gross figure of persons claiming unemployment benefit and the percentage of the work force which this represents in *(a)* Yorkshire and Humberside, *(b)* Barnsley metropolitan district area and *(c)* Barnsley West and Penistone for each month since May 1979.

Mr. Trippier: Following is the available information which is also in the Library. The table shows the numbers of unemployed people claiming benefits at unemployment benefit offices who are resident in the Barnsley local authority district and the Barnsley, West and Penistone parliamentary constituency in each month from June 1983. The comparisons are affected by changes in the coverage of the data. Unemployment rates cannot be produced because equivalent estimates of the work force are not available for these areas. A consistent series of the numbers of unemployed claimants in the Yorkshire and Humberside region for each month since May 1979, adjusted for discontinuities and seasonality, are also given, together with the corresponding unemployment rates expressed as a percentage of the working population.

Unemployed Claimants—Unadjusted

	Barnsley Local authority district	*Barnsley West and Penistone Parliamentary Constituency*
1983		
June	12,953	3,956
July	12,935	4,025
August	13,023	4,092
September	14,561	4,589
October	14,078	4,478
November	13,834	4,378
December	13,831	4,375
1984		
January	14,204	4,474
February	14,468	4,491
March	14,393	4,467
April	14,320	4,427
May	14,623	4,470
June	14,532	4,425
July	14,518	4,525
August	14,566	4,547
September	16,138	5,096
October	15,500	4,868
November	15,284	4,792
December	15,052	4,729
1985		
January	15,478	4,900
February	15,378	4,931
March	15,171	4,841
April	15,255	4,811
May	15,140	4,757
June	14,995	4,723
July	15,426	4,906
August	15,844	5,020
September	17,550	5,632
October	16,878	5,407
November	16,739	5,344
December	16,897	5,457
1986		
January	18,479	5,963
February	18,299	5,968
March	18,245	5,927
April	18,872	6,171
May	18,620	6,074
June	18,241	5,908
July	18,055	5,874
August	17,925	5,838
September	18,506	6,035
October	17,890	5,826
November	17,711	5,839
December	17,701	5,852
1987		
January	18,179	6,016
February	17,746	5,859
March	17,626	5,856
April	17,392	5,812

Yorkshire and Humberside unemployment adjusted for discontinuities and seasonality

	Number	*Rate*
1979		
May	100,700	4·4
June	98,500	4·3
July	98,800	4·3
August	97,500	4·3
September	96,500	4·2
October	97,600	4·3
November	96,200	4·2
December	97,600	4·3
1980		
January	99,300	4·3
February	103,900	4·5
March	109,100	4·8
April	114,000	5·0
May	117,800	5·1
June	123,800	5·4
July	131,100	5·7
August	140,600	6·1
September	148,200	6·5
October	157,000	6·8
November	169,100	7·4
December	178,200	7·8
1981		
January	185,900	8·2
February	192,200	8·5
March	198,800	8·8
April	204,200	9·0
May	209,900	9·2
June	213,300	9·4
July	217,000	9·6
August	217,600	9·6
September	224,400	9·9
October	226,600	10·0
November	228,800	10·1
December	230,000	10·1
1982		
January	231,900	10·3
February	232,200	10·3
March	232,500	10·3
April	234,700	10·4
May	237,600	10·5
June	240,800	10·7
July	243,400	10·8
August	245,800	10·9
September	246,900	10·9
October	251,800	11·1
November	254,700	11·3
December	257,700	11·4
1983		
January	158,700	11·5
February	259,200	11·5
March	260,900	11·6
April	262,600	11·7
May	263,400	11·7
June	266,100	11·9
July	265,600	11·8
August	265,600	11·8
September	266,100	11·9
October	264,400	11·8
November	265,100	11·8
December	266,300	11·9
1984		
January	267,600	11·7
February	270,500	11·9
March	271,100	11·9
April	271,200	11·9
May	272,900	12·0
June	273,300	12·0
July	275,500	12·1
August	276,600	12·1
September	280,400	12·3
October	282,700	12·4
November	283,300	12·4
December	283,100	12·4
1985		
January	283,900	12·2
February	285,700	12·2
March	286,200	12·3
April	288,700	12·4
May	288,400	12·3
June	287,100	12·3
July	288,200	12·3
August	289,400	12·4
September	290,100	12·4
October	290,400	12·4
November	291,900	12·5
December	295,400	12·6
1986		
January	298,400	12·6
February	299,100	12·7
March	302,100	12·8
April	301,800	12·8
May	303,200	12·8
June	305,100	12·9
July	304,700	12·9
August	304,500	12·9
September	302,300	12·8
October	300,400	12·7
November	298,400	12·6
December	296,500	12·5
1987		
January	295,800	12·5
February	292,100	12·4
March	293,800	12·4
April	290,100	12·3

Tourist Industry (North-West)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Paymaster General how many jobs have been created in the tourist industry in the north-west since 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Regional information for employment in tourism-related industries is not available for the period in question. However, employment in the north-west in the hotel and catering industry, including canteens and messes, increased by 22,000 between December 1983 and December 1986.

Restrictive Check Valves

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Paymaster General, pursuant to his reply of 11 May, *Official Report*, column 31, on valves from whom he received advice concerning the effect of the fitting of restrictive check valves upon the performance of the equipment.

Mr. Trippier: The Health and Safety Executive.

Small Firms (Leicester)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Paymaster General what information he has as to the number of small firms set up in Leicester *(a)* since 1979 and *(b)* since 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The available information is as follows.

VAT registrations in Leicestershire	*Number*
Number registered at end 1979	19,887
New registrations 1980-83	10,145
Deregistrations 1980-83	8,229
Net increase 1980-83	1,916
Number registered at end 1983	21,803

Details from 1983 to date are not readily available.

Dieldrin and Tributyltin Oxide

Mr. Dubs asked the Paymaster General whether he will review the approval for dieldrin and tributyltin oxide to be used as wood preservatives in the light of recent water pollution incidents, such as that at Lough Neagh, in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Trippier: The advisory committee on pesticides is to review the approval of tributyltin-oxide for all its uses and will be making recommendations to Ministers. There are no plans for a special review of dieldrin as the only known supplier of dieldrin for use in wood preservatives will be withdrawing from the market at the end of June 1987.

Dean Clough Industrial Park, Halifax

Mr. Galley asked the Paymaster General what is the total amount of Government aid, including enterprise allowance, business improvement scheme, Manpower Services Commission assistance and so on. given since 1983 to firms on the list sent to him by the hon. Member for Halifax, at the Dean Clough industrial park, Halifax.

Mr. Trippier: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Competition

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Paymaster General why, in the light of the fact that the implications of the United Kingdom proposal contained in CON(LO) 1981-82 are not matters for formal consideration by the Fair Competition Committee, they are being formally discussed by that committee.

Mr. Trippier: I shall write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Paymaster General (1) if he will make a statement on the background to the case currently being heard by the Fair Competition Committee in Brussels which refers to the anti-competitive implications of the United Kingdom proposal contained in COL(LO)1981-82 which deals with the use of excavators as cranes;

(2) if he will make a statement outlining the case which Her Majesty's Government will be putting forward in Brussels in support of condition 6 of CON(LO)1981-82 when the matter is considered by the fair competition committee.

Mr. Trippier: [*pursuant to the reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *31*]: I regret that my right hon. and learned Friend's previous reply requires correction. The correct text is as follows:

> I refer my hon. Friend to the replies which my hon. Friend gave on 14 and 15 April 1986 at column *855*.
>
> The certificate of exemption No. CON(LO)1981-2 is not subject to the notification requirements imposed by EEC directive 83/189. It is therefore not a matter for formal consideration by the committee to which my hon. Friend refers. However, the matter is being informally discussed by that committee and with representatives of appropriate trade associations in this country.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Duty-Free Goods

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has made to the Government of the Republic of Ireland about the recently imposed ban on the purchases of duty-free goods in Northern Ireland by residents of the Republic of Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office to a similar question on 30 April at column *194*. The Irish Government are aware of our concern. We are keeping a careful watch on the effect of the new measures in Northern Ireland.

Security

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the latest measures to improve security.

Mr. Tom King: My hon. Friend will know that I mentioned several important developments during the debate on security in Northern Ireland on 6 May. These included approval for an immediate increase in the number of full-time members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve, the voluntary call-out of part-time members of the Ulster Defence Regiment for full-time duty, the provision of additional helicopter resources, and the creation of a vehicle control zone on the main Belfast to Dublin Road at Killeen. I also made it clear that the present level of army support will remain for as long as it is needed, and that, where appropriate, certain additional support will be provided to help to counteract more directly the present terrorist campaign.

Electricity Supply

Mr. Archer asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the organisations and individuals which made representations or which were consulted on the draft Electricity Supply (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order.

Mr. Scott: The proposal for the draft Electricity Supply (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order received the usual wide distribution for consultative purposes and the following organisations and individuals submitted comments:

Sir Reginald Eyre, MP
Mr. John Hume, MP
Mr. Jim Kilfedder, MP
Mrs. Anna McCurley, MP
The right hon. Bruce Millan, MP
The right hon. Alf Morris, MP
The hon. William Waldegrave, MP (on behalf of a constituent)
Mr. Sean Neeson (Alliance Party)
Federation of Unions Supplying Electricity
Mr John Lyons (General Secretary of Electrical Power Engineers Association)
Mr. John Anderson (Electrical power Engineers Association)

Northern Ireland Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Northern Ireland Electricity
Northern Ireland Association of Citizen's Advice Bureaux
The General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland
Ulster Farmers Union
Belfast Solicitors Association
Belfast Law Centre
Women's Forum
Mr. Scott, Lisburn (private individual)
Law Society for Northern Ireland

Mr. Archer asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will publish the public responses received to the draft Electricity Supply (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order, or a summary of the reponses.

Mr. Scott: My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so.

TBTO Leak (Lough Neagh)

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has any evidence of invertebrate mortalities being caused at Lough Neagh by the spillage of wood preservative at Crumlin on 29 January; whether he has any evidence of wildlife mortalities since his reply of 31 March, *Official Report*, columns *501-2;* and whether he will provide further information on the wildlife surveys to be carried out in the area.

Mr. Scott: Extensive samples of chironomid (midge) larvae were taken from Lennymore Bay in Lough Neagh on 17 February by the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland's Fisheries Laboratory. Sites sampled near the mouth of the stream into which the wood preservative leaked, indicated chironomid mortality of up to 50 per cent. but other areas in the bay showed no sign of chironomid deaths. A further examination on 3 March showed mortalities had been arrested. An assessment of survival numbers is currently being carried out on behalf of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland by the University of Ulster and a further survey will be made later this year to assess how successfully chironomids have been re-established. There is no evidence of any other wildlife mortalities associated with the incident. The regular monthly counts of wildfowl at Lough Neagh and the continuing programme of fish testing for pesticide residues will indicate any long-term effects of the spillage.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, further to his reply of 31 March, *Official Report*, columns *501-2*, if he will list details of the water and fish sampling of Lough Neagh for tributyltin oxide and dieldrin following the spillage of wood preservative into the lough by location, date and sampling body.

Mr. Scott: Following the spillage of wood preservative at Crumlin a monitoring programme for water in Lough Neagh was organised by the Departments of the Environment and Agriculture for Northern Ireland. Samples of trout, pollen, roach and eels from Lough Neagh were obtained from commercial sources by the Fisheries Research Laboratory on 25 February and on 9, 11 and 13 March. Regular analyses of water from the lough put into public supply have not indicated any trace of TBTO or Dieldrin. Details of the water sampling are set out in the tables:

Results in nanogrammes per litre (ng/l)

Location	*Sampling period*	*Analyst*	*Range of results ng/l*
WATER SAMPLES (DIELDRIN)			
Lennymore Bay near mouth of affected stream	11 February 1987	Department of Economic Development, Industrial Science Division	200
Lennymore Bay (seven points)	11 February 1987	Department of Economic Development, Industrial Science Division	2-45
Eastern Shore of Lough Neagh (two points)	11 February 1987	Department of Economic Development, Industrial Science Division	2
Castor Bay	2 March 1987–20 March 1987	Department of Economic Development, Industrial Science Division	Not detected
Dunore Point	31 January 1987–4 April 1987	Department of Economic Development, Industrial Science Division	Not detected
Washing Bay	5 March 1987	Department of Economic Development, Industrial Science Division	Not detected
WATER SAMPLES (TBTO)			
Lennymore Bay (17 points)	4 February 1987–18 February 1987	Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland and Chemistry Department Queen's University, Belfast	5-628
Eastern Shore of Lough Neagh (two points)	4 February 1987–18 February 1987	Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland and Chemistry Department Queen's University, Belfast	6-103

Location	*Sampling period*	*Analyst*	*Range of results ng/l*
Main body of Neagh (nine points)	2 March 1987	Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland and Chemistry Department Queen's University, Belfast	Not detected
Castor Bay	2 march 1987–5 April 1987	Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland and Chemistry Department Queen's University, Belfast	5-95
Dunore Point	2 March 1987–4 April 1987	Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland and Chemistry Department Queen's University, Belfast	2·5-30
Washing Bay	5 March 1987–16 March 1987	Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland and Chemistry Department Queen's University, Belfast	2·5-25
Kinnego Bay	10 March 1987–16 March 1987	Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland and Chemistry Department Queen's University, Belfast	12·5-32·5

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether, pursuant to his reply of 31 March, *Official Report*, columns *501-2*, he is now able to detail the measures that will be taken to prevent a recurrence of a leakage of wood preservative from the Crumlin factory and other works using such chemicals in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Scott: The occupier of the Crumlin factory where the wood preservative was spilled has been required to fit equipment to the treatment chamber to prevent use of the preservative unless the access doors are sealed and to create a bonded area with a retaining capacity in excess of the maximum volume of fluid held. Inspections are being made of other factories in Northern Ireland using such chemicals to check that proper precautions are being taken to minimise accidents and to ensure containment.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has notified the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources of the Lough Neagh pollution incident involving the Lough Neagh Ramsar site, as required under article 3·2 of the convention on wetlands of international importance; and whether a report on this incident will be made to the forthcoming conference of contracting parties to the convention at Regina, Canada.

Mr. Scott: If, when full information on the effects of the Lough Neagh pollution incident is available, any adverse effect on the ecological character of the lough is apparent a report will be sent to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Similarly an interim report will be made to the conference of contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention at Regina, Canada in the event of any such adverse effect on the ecology.

There is currently no evidence of any adverse effects on the waterfowl in Lough Neagh as a result of this incident.

NHS (Staff)

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff have been employed by the National Health Service in Northern Ireland for each year since 1979, expressed as whole-time equivalents as well as actual full-time and part-time numbers in the following categories: *(a)* nurses and midwives, *(b)* ancillaries, *(c)* administrative and clerical and *(d)* professional and technical.

Mr. Needham: The information is as follows:

Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services Staff at 30 September

	(a) Nursing and Midwifery		*(b) Ancillary and General*		*(c) Administration and Clerical*		*(d) Professional and Technical*	
	Number	*Whole-time equivalents*	*Number*	*Whole-time equivalents*	*Number*	*Whole-time equivalents*	*Number*	*Whole-time equivalents*
1979	18,622	16,550·96	26,456	14,947·32	5,395	4,999·69	3,413	3,038·64
1980	19,758	17,484·14	26,660	15,151·60	6,050	5,587·69	3,569	3,179·02
1981	20,882	18,554·60	28,210	15,671·51	6,222	5,741·39	3,691	3,291·07
1982	21,286	19,022·99	28,825	15,795·77	6,376	5,876·00	3,740	3,340·24
1983	21,395	19,159·89	28,639	15,541·76	6,412	5,891·58	3,807	3,415·49
1984	21,161	19,006·20	28,157	15,202·91	6,484	5,954·11	3,851	3,464·01
1985	20,916	18,730·28	27,608	14,953·24	6,562	6,018·90	3,820	3,423·64
1986	20,722	18,496·27	26,771	14,470·09	6,710	6,120·97	3,764	3,373·52

Notes:

1. The figures quoted are in respect of the health and personal social services.
2. A breakdown of numbers into full-time and part-time is not readily available.

Disabled and Elderly Persons (Services)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration has been given to proposals for private sector involvement in the home help service and other community services for the disabled and elderly.

Mr. Scott: There is little or no scope for the involvement of the private sector in the provision of community services, including the home help service, in the "Regional Strategic Plan for 1987-92", which will be issued shortly by the Department of Health and Social Services, Health and Social Services Boards are being asked to adopt a more pluralistic approach to the planning and provision of services.

Population Statistics

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the estimated number of women aged 15 to 44 years resident in each county and county borough, pre-1974 boundaries, in Northern Ireland in 1985.

Mr. Scott: The information is not available.

Police Complaints

Mr. Archer asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland of those persons arrested by the police under emergency legislation in 1986 in Northern Ireland *(a)* how many asked for access to a legal adviser during the first 48 hours in custody following arrest; *(b)* how many asked for access after the first 48 hours in custoody; and *(c)* how many requests were granted respectively.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply,* 7 May 1987, c. *536*]: Information available shows that 550 persons asked to see a solicitor while detained under the emergency legislation. The information is not readily available in a form which would show how long after arrest their requests were made. All the requests were granted; 535 were granted after 48 hours had elapsed and 15 within 48 hours of arrest.

Scheduled Offences

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list separately for the Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserves, the Ulster Defence Regiment and the Army, the numbers of members and ex-members of these forces charged with and the number convicted of scheduled offences committed, or allegedly committed, by members of the security forces while using firearms, for each year since 1969.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply,* 14 May 1987]: I shall write, as soon as possible, on this and the outstanding parliamentary questions tabled by the hon. Member on the same topic.

Stolen Vehicles

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list by Royal Ulster Constabulary division, the number of vehicles stolen in Northern Ireland in 1986, the number of stolen vehicles recovered and the number of persons proceeded against for offences related to taking vehicles without their owners' consent.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply,* 14 May 1987]: The information is as follows:

RUC Division	*Number of vehicles stolen*	*Number of vehicles recovered*	*Persons proceeded against*
'A' Musgrave Street	2,002	1,374	55
'B' Springfield Road	1,817	1,376	95
'D' North Queen Street	1,291	868	55
'E' Strandtown	478	318	26
'G' Ards	185	134	37
'H' Armagh	264	152	24
'J' Portadown	413	326	49
'K' Cookstown	87	64	14
'L' Enniskillen	51	44	16
'N' Strand Road	147	105	16
'O' Coleraine	80	68	33
'P' Antrim	413	295	41
Total	7,228	5,124	461

Stolen Weapons

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many weapons were stolen in Northern Ireland in 1986; and if he will indicate whether these were stolen from the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Ulster Defence Regiment, the Army or private citizens; and if he will provide a breakdown according to whether the weapons were bullet-firing, shotguns, air weapons, etc.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply,* 14 May 1987]: During 1986, 144 weapons were stolen in Northern Ireland.

The breakdown is as follows:

	Bullet-firing weapons	*Shotguns*	*Air weapons*
Royal Ulster Constabulary	10	—	—
Ulster Defence Regiment	1	—	—
Army	2	—	—
Private Citizens	14	94	23

Casualties (Northern Ireland)

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fatal casualties there were in 1986 arising from incidents where security forces in Northern Ireland opened fire on vehicles taken without their owners' consent.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply,* 14 May 1987]: One man was shot dead by troops as he left the scene of a shooting attack on a security forces base in Londonderry in a stolen car. The rifle used in the attack was found in the vehicle. This was the only incident during 1986 in which a fatality resulted from the security forces opening fire on a vehicle taken without the owner's consent.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teachers' Dispute

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his estimate of the number of teaching days lost since the start of the present industrial action by teachers.

Mrs. Rumbold: In March and April 1987 about 85,000 teachers' working days are estimated to have been lost in total as a result of industrial action.

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many hours have been lost as a result of the teachers' strike assessed as to *(a)* teachers and *(b)* other employees working in schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information about hours lost is not available. In March and April 1987 about 85,000 teachers' working days are estimated to have been lost in total as a result of industrial action. No information is available about other employees working in schools.

Ecclesbourne School, Derbyshire

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many representations he has had about sixth form education at Ecclesbourne school, Duffield, Derbyshire; and if he will list the senders of such representations.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has received representations about sixth form education at Ecclesbourne school, Derbyshire, from the parent-teachers association group; a petition from parents containing over 8,000 signatures; and petitions from 11 to 16 and post-16 pupils at the school. In addition to this, 160 statutory objections representing over 1,600 signatures, and 20 non-statutory objections have been received.

Higher Education Courses (Inspections)

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many inspections of higher education courses or subjects, by Her Majesty's inspectors, took place in 1984, 1985 and 1986; what was the average period between inspection and the publication of the report; how many publications concerning inspections which took place in 1984 and 1985 remain outstanding; how many of these refer to Leeds polytechnic; and if he is taking any steps to reduce the period between inspection and the publication of reports.

Mr. Walden: Not all inspections of higher education courses or subjects result in published reports, since many are designed to contribute to national surveys. However, in 1984, 1985 and 1986 Her Majesty's inspectors inspected 20, 38 and 49 institutions, respectively. Of those that led to publication, the average period between inspection and publication was about 14 months. Eight reports relating to inspections carried out in 1984 and 1985 remain outstanding, and of these three relate to Leeds polytechnic. All the outstanding reports are of inspections which were part of larger surveys, and some relate to longitudinal studies.

Her Majesty's inspectorate recently employed an external firm of management consultants to examine the procedures for dealing with examination reports. They have made a number of recommendations whose implementation will, it is hoped, reduce the time between inspection and the issue of the reports.

Freshwater Biological Association

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) given on 30 April, *Official Report*, column 199, if he will make a statement about the reasons for reducing the grant in aid to the Freshwater Biological Association for 1987-88.

Mr. Walden: The reduction of the recurrent element of the NERC's grant-in-aid to the Freshwater Biological Association for 1987-88 is a consequence of the council's policy as set out in its corporate plan to increase the proportion of support to the universities and polytechnics. In addition, the 1986-87 total grant-in-aid to the association contained provision for capital items and other non-recurrent expenditure not applicable to 1987-88.

School Standards

Mr. Alan Howarth asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from the National Council for Educational Standards regarding the degree of conformity between the regression equations in his Department's statistical bulletin 13/84 and those in the council's report, "Standards in English Schools".

Mr. Dunn: Officials of the Department met representatives of the National Council for Educational Standards and the Centre for Policy Studies in January 1986 to discuss statistical issues raised by the Department's Statistical Bulletin 13/84 "School Standards and Spending: A Statistical Analysis".

The Department's bulletin was based on regression analysis. Results obtained by the NCES using regression methods were similar, notwithstanding its different data sources.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mrs. Rumbold: In 1986-87 the Department spent £311,949 on heating and lighting its 45 offices. Information about the amount spent on energy efficiency measures is not readily available and I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible with details.

Schools (Baddesley Clinton and Wolverton)

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will now give his decision about the future of the junior schools of Baddesley Clinton and Wolverton in Warwickshire, about which the hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington brought deputations last July.

Mr. Dunn: It would be inappropriate for my right hon. Friend to decide these proposals now.

Student Grants

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* the average value of the parental contribution to student grants in each year from 1978-79 to the most recent date for which information is available *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* in real terms using 1978-79 as a base.

Mr. Walden: The following table gives the average, assessed contribution from parents, spouses and students, for mandatory and full-value discretionary awards:

England and Wales

	Academic Years						
	1978-79 £	*1979-80* £	*1980-81* £	*1981-82* £	*1982-83* £	*1983-84* £	*1984-85* £
Value of average contribution	274	256	288	351	413	436	587
Value of average contribution in 1978-79 prices[1]	274	220	213	233	256	257	331

[1] Repriced from 1978-79 by movements in the Retail Price Index.

Soil Survey and Land Resources Centre

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the outcome of discussions between the Agriculture and Food Research Council, the Institution of Professional Civil Servants and the Cranfield Institute of Technology over the terms for the transfer of staff of the Soil Survey and Land Resources Centre.

Mr. Walden: This is primarily a matter for the Agricultural and Food Research Council, the Institute of Professional Civil Servants, the Cranfield Institute of Technology and the individual staff. I understand, however, that Cranfield has made offers of employment to the staff of the Soil Survey and that these are currently under consideration by the individuals concerned.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many staff of the Soil Survey and Land Resources Centre are to be transferred to the Cranfield Institute of Technology and at what Civil Service grade and salary scale; and what information he has as to the grade and salary scale of these staff members following transfer to Cranfield.

Mr. Walden: I understand that members of staff at the Soil Survey have received offers of employment from the Cranfield Institute of Technology. The number, grades and salary of the staff to be transferred will not be known until the staff concerned have individually accepted offers.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what reponse he has sent to the letter to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden), of 15 April from the Institution of Professional Civil Servants concerning the transfer of Soil Survey and Land Resources Centre staff to Cranfield Institute of Technology.

Mr. Walden: I shall be replying to the IPCS over the course of the next few days and the hon. Member may wish to contact the IPCS with regard to the contents of my reply.

Research Councils (Staff)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he has taken to ensure the smooth transfer of staff from research councils to other bodies; and what guidance he gives on negotiations between unions representing such staff and their new employer.

Mr. Walden: In 1986 the Government issued a guidance note to the Agricultural and Food Research Council, in its capacity as employer, and to other bodies concerning consultation with trade union sides on proposed transfers of work. I am sending the hon. Member a copy of the note.

City Technology College, Leicester

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on recent developments on the establishment of a city technology college in Leicester.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has not as yet received proposals to establish a city technology college in Leicester. He will be pleased to consider any proposals to do so which are put forward.

Leicester (Parental Choice)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to increase parental choice in education within the city of Leicester.

Mr. Dunn: It is for individual LEAs to determine the pattern of educational provision within their areas. In considering statutory proposals, my right hon. Friend takes into account, inter alia, their effect on parental choice.

Local Authority Charges (Review)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) whether, in the light of his review into local authority charges for school extras, any new legislation is proposed;

(2) if he will list all those educational activities which have come under consideration in the review of local authority charges.

Mrs. Rumbold: The review covered all services provided by local authorities, including those within education. The Government remain firmly committed to the basic principles of free education established by the Education Act 1944; I have nothing further to add to my reply of 9 April at column *335*.

Comprehensive Schools (Richmond-upon-Thames)

Mr. Jessel asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will set out in the *Official Report* figures to show, in respect of the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88, what average sum of money was or is being provided and spent for each child at comprehensive schools in the London borough of Richmond-upon-Thames for the general certificate of secondary education exam from *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the local education authority, specifying what part of each sum is mandatory, specific, or general increase in Government grant intended by him to be applied to the general certificate of secondary education.

Mrs. Rumbold: In the time available, I am unable to collate the information in the form requested, and I shall write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Freshwater Biological Association

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to implement the commitment to environmental research, with particular reference to freshwater biology, expressed in their response to the world conservation strategy report, contained in the document, "Conservation and Development—The British Approach"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden [*pursuant to his reply*, 30 April 1987, c. *199*]: The Natural Environment Research Council has responsibility for planning, encouraging and carrying out research on the natural environment. It is funded by my Department through grant-in-aid from the science budget, and by other Departments and other customers for specific pieces of research. Within the resources available to it, the council has to determine the allocation to freshwater biology and other priority areas. The council's plans for research in the area of conservation are given in section 4D of its 1987 corporate plan, copies of which are in the Library. Paragraph 4.31 concerns freshwater studies, but such studies are also included in other aspects of the council's work.

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Eduation and Science if he will list the schools participating in the assisted places scheme and the fees charged by each school.

Mr. Kenneth Baker [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 May 1987, c. *191*]: The annual tuition fees charged by schools participating in the assisted places scheme, at April 1987, are as follows:

School	*Annual tuition fee (£)*
Abbey School	1,956
Abingdon School	2,238
Aldenham School	3,375
Alice Ottley School	2,220
Alleyn's School	2,895
Arnold School	1,875
Ashford School	2,252
Bancroft's School	2,301
Bath High School	1,680
Batley Grammar School	1,587
Bedales School	4,095
Bedford High School	2,337
Bedford Modern School	2,199
Bedford School (Lower)	3,045
Bedford School (Upper)	3,180
Dame Alice Harpur School	1,923
Belvedere School	1,680
Berkhamsted School (11+)	2,289
Berkhamsted School (13+)	2,856
Berkhamsted School for Girls	2,301
Birkenhead High School	1,680
Birkenhead School	1,800
Bishop's Stortford College (Junior)	3,144
Bishop's Stortford College (Senior)	3,786
Blackheath High School	1,845
Bolton School (Boys)	1,824
Bolton School (Girls)	1,824
Bradfield College	4,179
Bradford Girls' Grammar School	1,911
Bradford Grammar School	1,998
Brentwood School	2,445
Brighton and Hove High School	1,680
Brighton College (Junior School)	2,259
Brighton College (College)	3,051
Bristol Cathedral School	2,013
Bristol Grammar School	2,136
Bromley High School	1,845
Bruton School for Girls	1,867
Bury Grammar School (Boys)	1,680
Bury Grammar School (Girls)	1,680
Canford School	4,305
Carmel College	3,690
Casterton School (Junior)	2,343
Casterton School (Senior)	2,682
Caterham School	2,748
Central Newcastle High School	1,680
Charterhouse	5,343
Cheadle Hulme School	2,010
Chigwell School	3,030
Churcher's College	2,391
City of London School	3,192
City of London School for Girls	2,550
Clifton College (Preparatory)	3,078
Clifton College (College)	3,942
Clifton High School (11-16)	1,725
Clifton High School (VIth Form)	1,890
Colfe's School	2,155
Colston's School (Preparatory)	2,274
Colston's School (Upper)	2,724
Colston's Girls' School	1,653
Coventry School	1,890
Cranleigh School (Preparatory)	2,517
Cranleigh School (Senior)	3,900
Croydon High School	1,845
Culford School	2,820
Dame Allan's Boys' School	1,848
Dame Allan's Girls' School	1,848
Dauntsey's School	2,991
Denstone College (11-12)	2,922
Denstone College (13+)	3,819
Dulwich College	3,225
Edgehill College	2,130
Eltham College	2,391
Emanuel School	2,499
Epsom College	3,696
Exeter School	2,160
Farnborough Hill School	2,100
Felsted School (Junior)	3,537
Felsted School (Senior)	4,572
Forest School (Boys)	2,721
Forest School (Girls)	2,670
Friend's School	2,931
Godolphin and Latymer School	2,470
Gresham's School	3,900
Haberdashers' Aske's School, Elstree	2,874
Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls, Elstree	1,710

School	*Annual tuition fee (£)*
Hampton School	2,190
Harrogate College	2,847
Hereford Cathedral School	2,280
Highgate School (Junior)	2,610
Highgate School (Senior)	2,898
Hulme Grammar (Boys)	1,782
Hulme Grammar (Girls)	1,782
Hymers College	1,602
Ipswich High School	1,680
Ipswich School (11-13)	2,388
Ipswich School (13+)	2,511
James Allen's Girls School	2,565
John Lyon School	2,130
Kent College (11-16)	2,517
Kent College (VIth Form)	2,928
King Edward's School at Bath	1,890
King Edward's School, Birmingham	2,250
King Edward VI High School, Birmingham	1,995
King Edward VII School, Lytham	1,680
King Edward VI School, Norwich	2,007
King Edward VI School, Southampton	2,170
King Edward's School, Witley	2,835
King's College School	2,730
King's High School for Girls	1,866
King's School, Chester	2,010
King's School, Macclesfield	2,475
King's School, Rochester (Junior)	2,541
King's School, Rochester (Senior)	2,913
King's School, Worcester	2,547
Kingston Grammar School	2,490
Kingswood School (11 + 12)	2,018
Kingswood School (13+)	2,783
Kirkham Grammar School	1,740
Lady Eleanor Holles School	2,220
La Sagesse Convent School (11-14)	1,809
La Sagesse Convent School (14-18)	1,869
Latymer Upper School	2,466
Leeds Girls' High School	1,935
Leeds Grammar School	1,917
Leys School (St. Faith's)	2,319
Leys School (Main)	4,287
Liverpool College	2,184
Lord Wandsworth College	2,685
Loreto Convent Grammar School	1,530
Loughborough Grammar School	2,073
Loughborough High School	1,845
Magdalen College School	2,133
Malvern College	4,017
Malvern Preparatory Schools:	
The Elms with Seaford Court	2,577
Wells House School	2,622
Hillstone School	2,967
The Downs School	2,877
Manchester Grammar School	2,031
Manchester High School	1,963
Maynard School	2,010
Merchant Taylors', Liverpool	1,959
Merchant Taylors', School for Girls, Liverpool	1,959
Merchant Taylors', Northwood	3,030
Mill Hill School (Junior)	2,520
Mill Hill School (Senior)	3,435
Monkton Combe School (11)	2,778
Monkton Combe School (13)	3,690
Monkton Combe School (VIth Form)	3,702
Mount St. Mary's College (Preparatory)	2,484
Mount St. Mary's College (College)	3,225
Newcastle Under Lyme School	1,616
Northampton High School	2,001
North London Collegiate School	2,061
Norwich High School	1,680
Nottingham Girls' High School	1,680
Nottingham High School (11-16)	1,845
Nottingham High School (VIth Form)	2,010
Notting Hill and Ealing High School	1,845
Old Palace School	1,650
Oxford High School	1,680
Perse School for Boys	2,112
Perse School for Girls	2,142
Plymouth College	2,280
Pocklington School	2,175
Portsmouth Grammar School	1,815
Portsmouth High School	1,680
Putney High School	1,845
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Blackburn	1,785
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield	1,908
Queen Elizabeth's Hospital School, Bristol	2,070
Queen Mary School, Lytham	1,680
Queen's College, Taunton (Junior)	2,607
Queen's College, Taunton (Senior)	3,066
Queens College, London	2,335
Queen's School, Chester	1,608
Ratcliffe College (Grace Dieu)	2,163
Ratcliffe College (Junior)	2,268
Ratcliffe College (Senior)	2,933
Ratcliffe College (VIth Form)	2,980
Redland High School	1,917
Red Maids' School	1,836
Reigate Grammar School	2,059
Repton School (11+)	2,835
Repton School (13+)	4,275
Rossall School (Year 1)	3,217
Rossall School (Year 2)	3,207
Rossall School (Year 3)	4,011
Rossall School (Years 4 and 5)	4,085
Rossall School (VIth Form Year 1)	4,029
Rossall School (VIth Form Year 2)	4,014
Royal Grammar School, Guildford	2,805
Royal Grammar School, Newcastle	1,749
Royal Grammar School, Worcester	2,100
St. Albans School	2,358
St. Albans High School for Girls	2,190
St. Ambrose College	1,722
St. Anselm's College	1,659
St. Bede's College	1,671
St. Bees School (Junior)	3,036
St. Bees School (Senior)	3,561
St. Benedict's School (11+)	2,100
St. Benedict's School (13+)	2,310
St. Catherine's School	2,700
St. Dunstan's College	2,175
St. Edmund's College (Junior)	2,592
St. Edmund's College (Senior)	2,865
St. Edward's College	1,926
St. George's College (Junior)	1,914
St. George's College (Senior)	3,234
St. Helen's School	2,154
St. John's College	1,710
St. John's School	3,246
St. Joseph's College (11-16)	1,635
St. Joseph's College (VIth Form)	1,866
St. Joseph's Convent	1,926
St. Mary's College	1,836
St. Mary's Convent	1,755
St. Mary's Hall	3,090
St. Maur's Convent (11-16)	2,085
St. Maur's Convent (VIth Form)	3,267
St. Paul's School (Preparatory)	2,322
St. Paul's School (Main)	3,117
St. Paul's Girls School	2,814
St. Peter's School (11-13)	2,352
St. Peter's School (13-16)	2,850
St. Peter's School (VIth Form)	3,027
St. Swithun's School	3,243
Salesian College (Lower)	1,170
Salesian College (Upper)	1,200
School of St. Helen and St. Katherine	1,875
Sedbergh School (Junior)	2,814
Sedbergh School (Senior)	4,080
Sheffield High School	1,680
Shrewsbury High School	1,680

School	Annual tuition fee (£)
Sir William Perkins's School	1,791
South Hampstead High School	1,845
Stamford School	1,956
Stamford High School	1,944
Stockport Grammar School	1,935
Stonyhurst College (Girl's Preparatory)	2,346
Stonyhurst College (Boy's Preparatory)	2,409
Stonyhurst College (College)	3,285
Stowe School	4,131
Streatham Hill and Clapham High School	1,845
Sutton High School	1,845
Sutton Valence School	3,342
Sydenham High School	1,845
Talbot Heath School	1,923
Taunton School (11-12)	2,742
Taunton School (13+)	3,537
Tonbridge School	3,762
Trent College (Junior)	2,799
Trent College (Senior)	2,819
Trinity School of John Whitgift	2,340
Truro School	2,115
Truro High School	1,725
University College School (11-13)	2,880
University College School (13+)	2,910
Upton Hall Convent School	1,455
Ursuline High School	1,801
Wakefield High School	1,710
Walthamstow Hall	2,370
Warwick School	2,148
Wellingborough School (Junior)	2,631
Wellingborough School (Senior)	2,919
Wellington College (Preparatory)	2,928
Wellington College (College)	4,020
Wellington School	2,160
Wells Cathedral School	2,694
West Buckland School	2,415
Westminster School (Under School)	2,763
Westminster School (Great School)	4,173
Whitgift School	2,460
William Hulme Grammar School	1,954
Wimbledon High School	1,845
Winchester College	4,755
Wisbech Grammar School (11-13)	2,235
Wisbech Grammar School (13+)	2,385
Withington Girls' School	1,740
Wolverhampton Grammar School	2,268
Woodbridge School	2,490
Woodhouse Grove School	2,250
Wycliffe College (Junior)	3,195
Wycliffe College (Senior)	3,714

Comprehensive Schools and Examinations

Mr. Alan Howarth asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will state the findings of his Department's statistical analyses of examination attainments at 16-plus and if he will state what differential performance they show as between LEAs with 15 per cent. of pupils in grammar schools and fully comprehensive LEAs, assuming that social class factors are held constant;.

(2) if he will state the main points which were agreed at a meeting between his Department's director of statistics and the authors of the Centre for Policy Studies report "Comprehensives: Counting the Cost" to consider his Department's statistical bulletin 13/84 and its relevance to proposals for the reorganisation of secondary schools.

Mr. Dunn [*pursuant to his reply*, 7 May 1987, *c.521*]: The statistical analyses carried out by the Department and published in statistical bulletin 13/84 demonstrated a strong statistical relationship between examination results achieved by pupils at schools in each local education authority and social background data for each authority. When these factors are taken into account, the analyses showed smaller but still statistically significant associations with some of the broad-based school and resource variables used including a positive correlation between some of the measures of examination results and the proportion of pupils attending grammar schools. The main points agreed at the meeting held in January 1986 were that the statistical analyses carried out by the Department for statistical bulletin 13/84 indicated that for three out of the five categories of examination attainments at 16-plus, covering pupils across the ability range, results were significantly higher in those local authorities that had retained a selective system of schooling. If social class and the other factors considered in the analyses were assumed to be held constant then the statistical expectation would be that a local education authority with 15 per cent. of pupils in grammar schools would have 2 per cent. more of its pupils attaining five or more higher grade O-level/CSE results than a fully comprehensive local education authority, 2·5 per cent. more of its pupils attaining one or more higher grade O-level/CSE results and 1·2 per cent. more of its pupils attaining one or more graded results at O-level/CSE.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Westminster Bridge (Illegal Parking)

Mr. Higgins asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vehicle drivers have been prosecuted, in the last week for which figures are readily available, for parking illegally on Westminster bridge.

Mr. Mellor: Parking offences are often dealt with by moving the vehicle on or by the issue of fixed penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution. Information is not separately available on the number of offenders dealt with for offences dealt with for offences on Westminster bridge.

Police Officers

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers from ethnic minority backgrounds are employed by each police authority; and what percentage these represent of all officers employed by each police authority.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is as follows:

Police Force	Number of ethnic officers on 31 March 1987	Percentage of actual strength
Avon and Somerset	13	0·43
Bedfordshire	22	2·31
Cambridgeshire	15	1·31
Cheshire	—	—
Cleveland	4	0·27
Cumbria	2	0·18
Derbyshire	17	0·96
Devon and Cornwall	2	0·07
Dorset	2	0·17
Durham	—	—
Dyfed Powys	—	—
Essex	15	0·55
Gloucestershire	5	0·43

Police Force	*Number of ethnic officers on 31 March 1987*	*Percentage of actual strength*
Greater Manchester	68	1·00
Gwent	1	0·10
Hampshire	8	0·26
Hertfordshire	15	0·95
Humberside	3	0·15
Kent	11	0·38
Lancashire	5	0·16
Leicestershire	30	1·75
Lincolnshire	—	—
Merseyside	26	0·57
Norfolk	—	—
Northamptonshire	13	1·24
Northumbria	9	0·26
North Wales	1	0·08
North Yorkshire	2	0·15
Nottinghamshire	30	1·35
South Wales	10	0·32
South Yorkshire	19	0·66
Staffordshire	11	0·52
Suffolk	2	0·17
Surrey	4	0·25
Sussex	5	0·18
Thames Valley	36	1·05
Warwickshire	6	0·62
West Mercia	10	0·52
West Midlands	123	1·85
West Yorkshire	50	0·97
Wiltshire	7	0·67
City of London	1	0·13
Metropolitan	350	1·30
TOTAL	953	0·79

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women police officers are employed by each policeauthority; and what percentage these represent of all officers employed by each police authority.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is as follows:

Police Force	*Number of women police officers on 31 March 1987*	*Percentage of actual strength*
Avon and Somerset	212	7·0
Bedfordshire	112	11·4
Cambridgeshire	111	9·7
Cheshire	222	12·1
Cleveland	151	10·3
Cumbria	89	8·0
Derbyshire	179	10·1
Devon and Cornwall	278	10·0
Dorset	114	9·5
Durham	83	6·4
Dyfed Powys	82	8·8
Essex	236	8·7
Gloucestershire	103	8·9
Greater Manchester	812	12·0
Gwent	71	7·3
Hampshire	254	8·2
Hertfordshire	177	11·2
Humberside	154	7·8
Kent	301	10·5
Lancashire	263	8·4
Leicestershire	178	10·4
Lincolnshire	93	7·9
Merseyside	531	11·5
Norfolk	99	7·5
Northamptonshire	99	9·5
Northumbria	260	7·6
North Wales	112	8·7
North Yorkshire	105	7·8
Nottinghamshire	158	7·1
South Wales	203	6·5
South Yorkshire	279	9·7
Staffordshire	239	11·3
Suffolk	108	9·3
Surrey	181	11·2
Sussex	261	9·2
Thames Valley	351	10·3
Warwickshire	87	9·0
West Mercia	224	11·6
West Midlands	909	13·7
West Yorkshire	484	9·4
Wiltshire	89	8·5
City of London	86	11·2
Metropolitan	2,655	9·9
Total	11,795	9·8

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what is the total number of (i) male and (ii) female remand prisoners held in prison in each year since 1979 for which figures are available.

Mr. Mellor: The annual average population held in Prison Department establishments in 1986 is published in tables 3 and 4 of "The Prison Population In 1986" (Home Office Statistical Bulletin Issue 6/87). Figures for earlier years are published in "Prison Statistics, England and Wales" (Table 1.4 of the latest issue, for 1985 Cmnd. 9903).

Law and Order (Leicester)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will report on any Government initiatives to maintain law and order within the city of Leicester.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Prisons

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the total amount of (i) capital spending and (ii) current spending on prisons for each year since 1979 for which figures are available.

Mr. Mellor: Spending on prisons in the financial years from 1978-79 to 1985-86 was as follows:

Year	*Net capital expenditure £ million*	*Net current expenditure £ million*
1978-79	26·3	231·8
1979-80	26·0	286·0
1980-81	33·6	380·6
1981-82	31·9	425·3
1982-83	41·6	467·8
1983-84	43·2	517·0
1984-85	53·9	554·8
1985-86	83·0	572·0

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth might receive a reply to his letter of 14 April concerning the proposed fresh start management structure for the future running of prisons, and in particular to the chaplain's role.

Mr. Mellor: My noble Friend will write to my hon. Friend shortly.

Passport Office, Newport

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will instruct the passport office at Newport to provide without further delay a new passport for Mrs. Linda Bowen of 11 Brakefield, South Brent, South Devon, for which she applied in mid March, whose application was acknowledged on 10 April and whose payment cheque was cashed on 15 April.

Mr. Waddington: The Newport passport office experienced some difficulty in locating Mrs. Bowen's application. I understand, however, that her new passport was issued and posted to her on 13 May.

Guildford Pub Bombings

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received urging a re-examination of the case of the four people convicted of the Guildford pub bombings.

Mr. Mellor: Since my reply to the hon. Member's question on 9 April at column 364 we have received six letters requesting that the convictions be reviewed. We have also received a petition containing 936 signatures which asks for the immediate release of the four persons concerned and of those convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent reviews he has undertaken of the case of the four people convicted of the Guildford pub bombings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a Question from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) on 2 April at column *591*.

Immigration

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many stops have been refused by Her Majesty's Government since the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Bill received its Second Reading.

Mr. David Waddington: The information requested is not available. The guidelines on MPs representations have not been affected by the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Bill.

Haringey

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what Metropolitan police special units were used on 2 May in Haringey;

(2) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many Y division police were deployed in Haringey on 2 May on the occasion of the positive images march and demonstration;

(3) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many police from outside Y division of the Metropolitan police were deployed in Haringey on 2 May.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Commissioner informs me that a total of 85 officers were deployed from the Y divisions and 206 from outside. Of the latter 19 were traffic police and 69 fron territorial support groups.

Asylum Seekers (Kurds)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hon. Members sought stops on the removal of Kurdish people from Iraq who arrived in the United Kingdom on 5 May and 7 May.

Mr. Waddington: I understand that three hon. Members expressed an interest in the case.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the United Kingdom immigrants advisory service concerning the asylum application of Kurdish people from Iraq who have arrived in the United Kingdom since 5 May.

Mr. Waddington: Since 3 May 1987 several groups of Iraqi Kurds have travelled from Syria, via West Germany, on Lufthansa flights with forged documents and claimed asylum on arrival in the United Kingdom. All had previously been living in camps in Iran. Officials from the Department have discussed the applications with representatives of the refugee unit of the United Kingdom Immigrants' Advisory Service.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibilty; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Hurd: The information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Hurd: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Community Relations (Leicester)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to promote community relations within the city of Leicester.

Mr. Waddington: I shall write to the my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Leicester Prison

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce overcrowding in Leicester prison.

Mr. Mellor: Earlier this month we transferred to Glen Parva remand centre Leicester's responsibility for assessing and allocating sentenced young offenders. The conversion of Ashwell prison from an open to a closed prison later this year and the opening of Littlehey prison will both provide further relief. In the longer term we are exploring the scope for reducing the area from which Leicester draws its population.

Prisoners (Temporary Release)

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received requesting the temporary release on compassionate grounds of members of the Clarke family to attend their mother's funeral in Liverpool.

Mr. Hurd: We have received oral representations from two hon. Members and others in the local community.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the criteria for prisoners being allowed home to attend funerals of parents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: Prisoners are normally allowed to attend the funeral of a parent or close relative unless there are positive reasons to the contrary, for example the risk of escape or security. Each case is judged according to the individual circumstances.

Fresh Start

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for implementing the proposed fresh start package in the light of the Prison Officers' Association ballot; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: I welcome the result of the recent Prison Officers' Association ballot on fresh start. In view of the overwhelming support which prison officers and prison governors have expressed by their votes, I believe that fresh start should be implemented as soon as possible. I have in mind a staged process of implementation over the next six months, starting in June with the introduction of the pay structures for the new grades I to V of the service. This would be followed by the implementation of monthly pay for prison officers in early July. Subject to local agreement the new working arrangements would be introduced in establishments from early July for those prisons where the process of reviewing structure had been completed, and therafter in individual establishments as and when the process was completed. The aim would be to complete implementation by October. The new rates of pay for grades VI to VIII would apply in an establishment on the date it converted to fresh start working. We shall in the usual way consult the prison service unions on the entire programme of implementation as it proceeds.

I hope that the introduction of this package of reforms will produce an atmosphere in which a closer and more constructive relationship between prison service management and the Prison Officers' Association can be built up so that the full benefits of what has been agreed can be obtained.

Visa Applications

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long each of the 51 people, whose cases are currently being considered, and who applied for visas at the British High Commission, Colombo, on the grounds that they were suffering severe hardship, waited before a decision was made on their application; when each of the 14 people whose applications for visas on the grounds of severe hardship in Colombo are still under consideration applied for these visas; and what guidance has been issued to the staff at the British High Commission in Colombo as to the criteria to be used in deciding on applications for visas on the grounds of severe hardship.

Mr. Waddington [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 April 1987, c. *527-28*]: The information requested is not yet available and I shall write to the hon. Member when our inquiries are completed.

Radioactive Contamination (Emergency Services)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) which sources the emergency services in Avon can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(2) from which sources the emergency services in South Glamorgan can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(3) from which sources the emergency services in Gloucestershire can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(4) from which sources the emergency services in Somerset can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(5) from which sources the emergency services in Dorset can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units, and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(6) from which sources the emergency services in East Sussex can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units, and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(7) from which sources the emergency services in Kent can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total

number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units, and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(8) from which sources the emergency services in Suffolk can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units, and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(9) from which sources the emergency services in Cleveland can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units, and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(10) from which sources the emergency services in Durham can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units, and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(11) from which sources the emergency services in Tyne and Wear can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units, and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(12) from which sources the emergency services in Cumbria can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units and *(e)* decontamination units available for use;

(13) from which sources the emergency services in Gwynedd can call for equipment to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and if he will call for a report from the emergency services in that area detailing the total number of *(a)* dosimeters, *(b)* radiac survey meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing, *(d)* breathing units and *(e)* decontamination units available for use.

Mr. Douglas Hogg [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 April 1987, c. *61-63*]: With regard to the police service the information requested is as follows:

Police force	*Dosimeters*	*Radiac survey meters*	*Protective clothing*	*Breathing units*	*Decontamination units*
South Wales	50	523	—	—	—
Suffolk	18	347	—	192	—
Cleveland	28	137	—	—	—
Durham	14	438	—	—	—
Northumbria	58	532	—	6	—
Dorset	15	382	—	—	—
Gloucestershire	14	338	—	—	—
Sussex	52	529	—	—	—
Kent	39	570	—	—	—
North Wales	12	780	—	70	—
Avon and Somerset	14	338	—	—	—
Cumbria	35	375	—	—	—

Much of this equipment is held for civil defence purposes and would be unlikely to be of use in a peacetime emergency. Further equipment and professional advice is available, as set out in the Emergency Planning Guidance to Local Authorities (a copy of which is in the Library).

Health authorities locally are responsible for the day to day management of ambulance services and the information requested is not held centrally.

With regard to the fire service I shall write to the hon. Member.

Radioactive Contamination (Police Training)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of South Glamorgan as to *(a)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(b)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(c)* how many people are employed by the police to train policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity, and what are their areas of expertise, *(d)* what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment, and protective clothing, and *(e)* what is the total amount of money allocated to the training of, firstly, a police constable and, secondly, a police sergeant to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Suffolk as to *(a)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(b)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(c)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactivity, and what are their areas of expertise, *(d)* what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment, and protective clothing, and *(e)* what is the total amount of money allocated to the training of, firstly, a police constable and, secondly, a police sergeant to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Cleveland as to *(a)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(b)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(c)* how many people are employed by the police to train

policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity, and what are their areas of expertise, *(d)* what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment, and protective clothing, and *(e)* what is the total amount of money allocated to the training of, firstly, a police constable and, secondly, a police sergeant to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(4) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Durham as to *(a)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(b)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(c)* how many people are employed by the police to train policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity, and what are their areas of expertise, *(d)* what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment, and protective clothing, and *(e)* what is the total amount of money allocated to the training of, firstly, a police constable and, secondly, a police sergeant to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(5) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Tyne and Wear as to *(a)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(b)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(c)* how many people are employed by the police to train policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity, and what are their areas of expertise, *(d)* what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment, and protective clothing, and *(e)* what is the total amount of money allocated to the training of, firstly, a police constable and, secondly, a police sergeant to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(6) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Dorset as to *(a)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving contamination, *(b)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(c)* how many people are employed by the police to train policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity, and what are their areas of expertise, *(d)* what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment, and protective clothing, and *(e)* what is the total amount of money allocated to the training of, firstly, a police constable and, secondly, a police sergeant to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(7) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of East Sussex as to *(a)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(b)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(c)* how many people are employed by the police to train policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity, and what are their areas of expertise, *(d)* what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment, and protective clothing, and *(e)* what is the total amount of money allocated to the training of firstly, a police constable and, secondly, a police sergeant to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(8) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Kent as to *(a)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(b)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(c)* how many people are employed by the police to train policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity, and what are their areas of expertise, *(d)* what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment, and protective clothing, and *(e)* what is the total amount of money allocated to the training of firstly, a police constable and, secondly, a police sergeant to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(9) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Gwynedd as to *(a)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(b)* how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination, *(c)* how many people are employed by the police to train policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity, and what are their areas of expertise, *(d)* what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment, and protective clothing, and *(e)* what is the total amount of money allocated to the training of firstly, a police constable and, secondly, a police sergeant to deal with accidents involving radioactive contamination.

Mr. Douglas Hogg [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 April 1987, c. *59-61*]: Officers of all the police forces concerned are trained, during initial training and refresher courses, in the effect of radioactivity. Information on the number of days spent in specific training or in the allocation of money to training police constables or police sergeants is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Metropolitan Police (Overtime)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what current limitations exist on the amount of overtime that may be worked by any member of the Metropolitan police, or restrictions on the mileage over any given period and the use of its road vehicles.

Mr. Douglas Hogg [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 April 1987, c. *63*]: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that it is his policy that overtime should be authorised only when it is operationally necessary. A total of £59·2 million has been set aside for overtime payments to Metropolitan police officers during the present financial year. Divisions and branches of the force have been given allocations from the total, and it is the responsibility of senior officers locally to use the allocation to best effect. They are also expected to ensure that vehicles are used effectively, efficiently and economically.

Traffic and Litter Offences (London)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been brought during each of the past three years by the Metropolitan police in respect of *(a)* parking offences, *(b)* bus lane offences and *(c)* litter dropping.

Mr. Mellor [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 May 1987, c. *18*]: The information available on prosecutions for parking offences by police force area relates to findings of guilt for obstruction, waiting and parking offences and is published annually in "Offences relating to motor vehicles England and Wales: Supplementary tables" (table 17 in the issue for 1985, the latest available), copies of which are in the Library.

On the subject of bus lane offences I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) on 24 November 1986 at column *50*.

The following table gives the information available to me on persons proceeded against for litter offences in the Metropolitan Police District.

Persons proceeded against under the Litter Act 1983 in the Metropolitan Police District

	Number of persons
1983	14
1984	6
1985	24

SCOTLAND

Maintained Schools

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the annual expenditure, in 1987 prices, from 1975-76 to date on repair, maintenance and improvement work on maintained schools in Scotland; what is his Department's estimate of the expenditure needed to bring the condition of maintained schools in Scotland to a fully reconditioned and repaired state, complying with up-to-date building standards, not including the reconditioning of those schools for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or otherwise disposal, or the expected depreciation of school buildings in this financial year; what is his Department's estimate of the annual expenditure to prevent the condition of maintained schools in Scotland from deteriorating, excluding those schools for which there is no intention to recondition or repair, but where the proper course is demolition or otherwise; and what is the capital value of maintained school buildings in Scotland.

Mr. John MacKay: The information available is given in the following table, which has been compiled from local authority financial returns for the period from 1976-77, the first full year after local government reorganisation in Scotland, to 1985-86. The information collected centrally on capital expenditure incurred by local authorities does not record separately capital expenditure on the maintenance or improvement of school buildings or on the capital value of school buildings in Scotland. The data which would be required in order to make the estimates requested by the hon. Member in the latter part of his question are not held centrally.

Current expenditure on repair and maintenance of local authority school buildings at 1986-87 prices

	£ million
1976-77	58·771
1977-78	22·549
1978-79	67·529
1979-80	66·028
1980-81	62·430
1981-82	60·209
1982-83	60·602
1983-84	67·387
1984-85	67·388
1985-86	61·002

Gateway Centre

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what grant is paid to the Gateway Centre in Scotland; what purposes this grant is intended to cover; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: No application for grant has been received from the Gateway Exchange.

Peterhead Prison

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if the commencement of the preliminary works at the new Peterhead prison will be further delayed; if there are any plans to build a new prison other than Peterhead; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The preliminary works for the new Peterhead prison have not yet commenced pending an economic appraisal of the project. There are no plans at present to build a new prison other than the one at Peterhead.

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the cost of repairing the damage caused by the disturbance at Peterhead prison earlier in the current year; how much of the cost falls upon *(a)* public funds and *(b)* the insurance company; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The cost of making good the damage to A hall at Peterhead prison is estimated at £260,000. This cost falls upon public funds since it is not Government practice to undertake insurance.

Prisons (Disturbances)

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he considered issuing guidelines to the media on a news blackout when disruptive action takes place at any of Her Majesty's prisons in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: A temporary blackout was requested and adhered to in the course of one of the recent incidents at Scottish prisons and consideration is being given to the procedures for such requests in the event of any future similar incidents.

Prison Officers, Peterhead (Housing)

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the position regarding guidelines issued to local authorities and the Scottish Special Housing Association on houses for renting to officers at Her

Majesty's prison, Peterhead; if he will investigate the complaint that prison officers are in a lower category of applicants than oil-related workers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: No guidelines have been issued to local authorities. The management of council housing is the responsibility of the local authority for the area concerned and the Secretary of State has no powers to intervene in the way this responsibility is carried out.

The Scottish Special Housing Association has guidelines for their economic expansion houses for essential incoming workers. Greatest priority is given to oil and manufacturing workers. I understand, however, that, at present, prison officers seeking SSHA houses in the Peterhead area are normally being offered a house within six to 12 weeks of applying. My right hon. and learned Friend is aware there has been some criticism of the allocation procedures for economic expansion houses and Scottish Development Department is currently reviewing these procedures.

Dornoch Firth (Road Bridge)

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current proposed starting date for construction of the road bridge across the Dornoch Firth; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: The Dornoch Firth bridge is the subject of a design and build competition the result of which is expected to be announced in January 1988. Construction of the bridge is planned to start in January 1989. Work on the southern approach road will begin in June this year and will be followed by a start on the northern approach road in August.

A9 (Dunbeath Bridge)

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current proposed starting date for construction of the new Dunbeath bridge on the A9 in Caithness; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: Construction will start in September this year.

NHS (Staff)

Mr Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many staff have been employed by the National Health Service in Scotland for each year since 1979, expressed as whole-time equivalents as well as actual full-time and part-time numbers in the following categories: *(a)* nurses and midwives, *(b)* ancillaries, *(c)* administrative and clerical and *(d)* professional and technical.

Mr. John MacKay: The information requested is shown in the table.

Staff employed by the NHS in Scotland
Whole Time, Part Time and Whole time Equivalent for selected groups at 30 September

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Nurses and Midwives[1]								
Whole Time	40,921	42,467	44,736	45,479	46,042	45,751	46,077	46,161
Part Time	25,418	25,644	26,199	26,384	26,187	25,955	26,096	26,815
Whole Time Equivalent	56,037·2	58,602·5	61,125·5	61,979·2	62,395·5	62,027·4	62,562·1	62,868·2
Ancillaries								
Whole Time	17,393	17,056	16,998	16,765	16,210	15,369	14,551	13,780
Part Time	16,761	17,018	17,569	18,133	18,278	18,341	18,530	18,904
Whole Time Equivalent	27,059·5	26,895·5	27,126·2	27,194·0	26,716·8	25,934·9	25,270·7	24,568·1
Administrative and Clerical								
Whole Time	11,459	11,564	11,810	11,929	12,037	11,904	12,067	12,157
Part Time	3,080	3,117	3,378	3,579	3,782	3,913	4,093	4,199
Whole Time Equivalent	13,121·6	13,255·7	13,628·8	13,880·3	14,088·0	14,052·8	14,315·1	14,445·5
Professional and Technical[2]								
Whole Time	8,582	8,785	9,061	9,240	9,495	9,619	9,816	9,934
Part Time	1,664	1,698	1,762	1,845	1,858	1,883	1,952	2,072
Whole Time Equivalent	9,340·8	9,546·6	9,879·5	10,104·0	10,355·2	10,514·2	10,755·3	10,927·1

[1] In 1979 the WTE calculation for part-time nurses was based on a 40 hour week; from 1980 it is based on a 37½ hour week.

[2] Includes: Scientific and PAM, Technical, Works, and Pharmacists and Opticians.

Police (Free Prescriptions)

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland why police officers in Scotland receive medical prescriptions free; why this does not apply also to the nursing profession; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: As part of their conditions of service police officers have been provided with free medical and dental treatment since 1919. The need for this ended in July 1948, when they became entitled to free treatment under the NHS. But when NHS charges were introduced it was agreed that police officers should not have to pay for treatment to which they had previously been entitled free of charge. Provision was accordingly made in the Police (Scotland) Regulations 1976 for officers to be reimbursed for NHS medical and dental treatment for which a charge was made. There are no comparable circumstances in the case of nurses.

Nurses

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the reason for increasing a nurse's board and lodging charges from £42 to £70 per month when the nurse reaches the age of 22 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: The agreement on lodging charges for nursing staff, which are negotiated with the staff side of the nursing and Midwifery Staffs Negotiating Council, provides for a remission for staff under the age of 22.

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many enrolled nurses have applied for positions in the Grampian health board area in the years 1983 to 1986; what is the latest figure for 1987; and how many were appointed.

Mr. John MacKay: Appointment of nursing staff in the Grampian area is a matter for Grampian health board, and this information is not available centrally.

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland why nurses who are transferred from Aberdeen hospital to Ladysbridge hospital in Banff are obliged to pay £650 over a 42-week period in personal travelling expenses; if he will consider some form of reimbursement for these outlays; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: The nurses in question are students in training at Foresterhill college of nursing and midwifery for the first level qualification in nursing the mentally handicapped. Grampian health board take the view that these students are based in Aberdeen during the first stage of their training, and in Banff for the second stage, and provide accommodation at each location for the relevant period. In these circumstances travelling expenses are not payable except for periods spent away from Banff during the second stage.

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how the clothing allowance is assessed for nurses when on the type of duty which requires ordinary clothing rather than uniform; what are the monetary values of the allowance per annum; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: There is no national agreement on this matter, which is left to the discretion of individual health boards. The management side of the Nursing and Midwifery Staffs Negotiating Council has, however, advised boards that alternative clothing, or monetary allowances, should in general cost no more than uniforms.

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many nurses are on night duty at Campbell hospital, Portsoy; for how many people services are provided; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: There are five nurses on night duty at Campbell hospital, Portsoy, to cover 58 long-stay geriatric patients.

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many nurses are on the day shift and for dressings at Campbell hospital, Portsoy; how many people are covered; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: The total nursing establishment for day duty at Campbell hospital, Portsoy, is 33. This includes cover for working shifts, for time off, holidays and sick leave. Of the total establishment, 16 are fully trained nurses available to deal with dressings as and when required. This establishment covers 58 long-stay geriatric patients.

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what guarantee is given to nurses at Ladysbridge hospital, Banff on secondment to the college at Foresthill for further training of a post at Ladybridge on completion of the 18-month course; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: Any nurse who is seconded to a course at a College of Nursing and Midwifery would normally be expected to return to her original post or an equivalent one on completion of the course. There are at present vacancies for qualified nursing staff at Ladysbridge hospital.

Elderly Patients (Banff and Buchan)

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will investigate the circumstances in which elderly persons residing in Banff and Buchan who require to see a medical specialist have to travel into Aberdeen rather than be interviewed in Banff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: The matter of service provision is essentially a local issue and it is for the health board to decide how, any particular service should be provided.

Prisoner (Injury Award)

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to appeal against the award of £36,000 to a convicted prisoner at Peterhead prison who received his injuries when endeavouring to escape from the prison; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Yes. An appeal has now been lodged against the decision of Lord Cowie in the Court of Session to award compensation to Mr. Glen Hewson, a convicted prisoner who was injured while attempting to escape from Peterhead prison in 1982. Pending the outcome of the appeal, it would not be appropriate for my right hon. and learned Friend or myself to comment on particular aspects of the case.

Prison Officers (Fresh Start)

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland why prison officers are not mentioned in the fresh start scheme; if the scheme can apply to Scottish prison officers in addition to those in other parts of the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The Fresh Start package of prison service staffing reforms, covering working arrangements, management structure and pay and conditions, was proposed, in the first instance, by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary in relation to England and Wales. But officers of the Scottish Prison Officer Association (SPOA) and of the Governors' Branch (Scotland) of the Society of Civil and Public Servants, and my officials, have participated in the discussions on Fresh Start. I have instructed my officials to consult the unions about implementation in Scotland.

Public Bodies (Heating and Lighting)

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties occupied by each of the public bodies for which he has responsibility; and if he will list details of the amount spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Ancram: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rost asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the total expenditure during 1986-87 incurred upon the heating and lighting of properties for which he is directly responsible; and if he will give details of the amounts spent on energy efficiency measures in these properties during the same period.

Mr. Ancram: Fuel costs in properties held on the Scottish Office Administration Vote totalled £722,782.

It is not possible to identify separately the amounts spent on energy efficiency. But the Scottish Office has adopted a comprehensive strategy of conservation measures which are showing some encouraging results.

Local Authority Charges

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department has conducted any recent review of local authority charges; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: I participated in a review of local authority fees and charges throughout Great Britain. Consideration of the review has not yet been completed.

Community Care (Funds)

Mr. David Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to provide a central reserve of funds to direct to Crossroads (Scotland) and other voluntary organisations involved in care in the community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: Statutory responsibility for the provision of domiciliary and other support to enable persons to maintain their residence in the community rests primarily with local authorities. Some 40 local Crossroads schemes providing respite care through paid care attendants are currently receiving support either from the Manpower Services Commission or from local authorities or health boards under support finance arrangements.

My Department provides grant assistance for the headquarters' expenditure of a range of national social work organisations, including Crossroads (Scotland), as well as for some local projects, normally of a specialised or innovatory nature; local projects currently in receipt of grant include 18 which embody different examples of community care, of which two are Crossroads schemes. I see no case for altering this balance of support from public funds.

Peterhead Prison (Interviewing Panel)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Scotland who was on the interviewing panel when Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate interviewed prisoners at Peterhead recently; whether any member of the panel was of the governor grade; when he expects Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate's report into Peterhead to be published; and how many category A and B prisoners are currently in Peterhead.

Mr. Lang: I shall write to the hon. Member.

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 116**

SESSION 1986–87

11th May–15th May 1987

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speakers rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R = first reading, 2R = second reading, Money res = money resolution, Com = Committee stage, Rep = Report stage, 3R = third reading, amendt/amendts = amendment/amendments, * = matter taken formally, without debate.

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